DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 766 RC 018 625

AUTHOR Brown, Gerald L.
TITLE Reading and Language Arts Curricula in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indians and Alaska Natives.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC. Indian Nations At Risk Task Force.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 36p.; In: Indian Nations At Risk Task Force Commissioned Papers. See RC 018 612.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alaska Natives; *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Bilingual Education; Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; English (Second Language); Language Acquisition; *Language Arts; *Reading Instruction; *Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Native students rank far below norms in reading, language arts, and language arts related subjects. This paper reviews the literature to address strategic plans for reading and language arts curricula for Native students. An overview is presented of theories of first and second language acquisition and learning, stages of language development, and the influence of the learning environment. Second language instruction framed in current theory includes the comprehension, communicative, holistic or integrated, and natural approaches. Instruction and student evaluation are described for the total physical response method. Content-based instructional approaches and the relationship between academic competency and second language (English) competency are discussed, including: the academic needs of Native students; the importance of the nature of the text, the nature of the reader, and the interaction between text and reader in reading instruction for Native students; major impediments facing Native students as they learn to read in English; and methods of overcoming these impediments. Also discussed are the language experience approach and its effectiveness with Native students, adapting the basal reader, integrating the language arts, and the whole language approach. Specific instructional strategies that have proven effective for Native students are offered: analyzing the language complexity of the learning task; providing contextual cues; peer interaction and cooperative learning experiences; modifying lessons or providing alternative activities for limited English proficient students; incorporating comprehension checks; using preview and review techniques; making the text comprehensible; and adapting content. This paper contains 44 references. (SV)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

# Reading and Language Arts Curricula in Elementary and Secondary Education for American Indians and Alaska Natives

ED343766

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Gerald L. "Jerry" Brown
Interface Network, Inc.

## Introduction

American Indians and Alaska Natives are the most educationally disadvantaged of all Americans, with the highest dropout rate among all minorities. Little progress has been made toward meeting the educational needs of this group. The shortage of information about American Indian and Alaska Native students presents problems in determining what types of educational practices work best among these groups.

A cursory review of the literature regarding Native student achievement indicates that this population ranks far below the norm in reading, language arts, and language arts related categories (e.g., science, mathematics, social studies, etc.) (Brown, 1986). Basic to this problem is the reality that many Native students are not successfully accessing the language so essential for being successful in American academia. In other words, they have not been successful in developing an adequate cognitive academic language proficiency (CALPs). Since traditional American education is textbook driven and requires high levels of cognitive academic language proficiency, the educational establishment does not appear to be very effective in providing Native students with the necessary cognitive academic language proficiency (Fox 1987, 1988, 1990).

It appears necessary to start at a very basic level in addressing strategic plans for reading and language arts curricula in elementary and secondary education for Native students. It has been well established that not only are many teachers of Native students not prepared to adequately teach such students, but there is very little opportunity for them to find the necessary training and education. With this in mind, this paper will follow an evolutionary approach of starting with language acquisition and work its way to content area language arts — leading to the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALPs). At appropriate points, current efforts in Native education will be used as examples of what can been done to implement effective practices at various stages of language development (INAR Task Force hearings, 1990). The process and the approaches recommended are applicable to the maintenance and development of the Native language as well as the English language. Also, special attention needs to be given in using these tools to transition Native students from their home language (whether it be a Native language or "Reservation" or "Village English") to achieve English in a dignified and a psychologically and educationally sound manner.

This paper is the result of an ongoing effort to keep current with the literature and research on reading and language arts and special efforts to identify exemplary American Indian and Alaska Native educational programs that are meeting the needs of Native students in reaching educational parity. As requested in the initial charge by the INAR Task Force, the research and literature will be presented in solution form rather than a statement of a problem.

## Language Acquisition

Three questions will be given primary consideration under the topic of language acquisition:

### *How do Children Acquire Their First Language?*

It is useful to examine briefly some of the theories that seek to explain the language acquisition process of children. These theories have helped to provide a framework on which current theories of second language acquisition are based. This discussion is divided into the following components:

#### Language Acquisition Theory

Using language to communicate is a natural consequence of being human. Almost all children

RC 017 625

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

who speak are exposed to language regardless of the environment in which they are raised. When children acquire their language, they produce the grammar of that language, which is a finite system of rules: phonological (the sounds of a language), morphological (the structure of words), syntactic (the relationship among words in an utterance), and semantic (the meaning of words). No one teaches them these rules; no one tells them to form a sentence by adding a verb phrase to a noun phrase. The rules are learned unconsciously as children acquire their language. A number of theories have evolved to explain how children acquire language.

The **behaviorist view** supports that a child is reinforced positively or negatively in response to various stimuli. For example, a mother will most likely provide a positive reinforcement in response to her infant saying "ma-ma." On the other hand, a positive response to "ma-ma" is less likely when the child is three or four, as reinforcement becomes progressively more dependent on how closely the child's language matches adult speech. Thus, the reinforcement theory hypothesizes that children are conditioned to speak correctly by being negatively reinforced for "errors" and positively reinforced for "correct" usage. In this context, language acquisition is viewed as a result of an innate general learning capacity plus an environment that shapes the child's behavior. The behaviorist view, however, does not explain how children are able to manipulate language to make unique and novel utterances.

The **innatist view** that emerged during the 1960s offers a theory that attempts such an explanation: Noam Chomsky presents the strong version of the innatist's point of view that maintains that every child is born with universals of linguistic structure "wired in." According to Chomsky, children pick up the rules of their language in such an efficient way as to suggest that their brains are programmed for language learning or that they have some kind of innate language that allows them to know what a possible language looks like. The child then makes guesses or hypotheses as to the rules that underlie the patterns. Chomsky suggests that this innate language acquisition device allows children to make increasingly complex theories about the rules of their language (Chomsky, 1965).

This strong position was modified in the 1970s. While still giving recognition to the substantial role of innate contribution to language acquisition, many innatists now define the innate component not as a body of unconscious "knowledge" about the structure of human language, but rather as a "substantial innate cognitive potential for processing human language, so as to derive its structure" (Lindfors, 1980). Rather than possessing advance information, children are born with processing abilities that enable them to find out about language and to analyze data (Derwing, 1971; Slobin, 1973). The grammatical system is not given as innate knowledge, but when these processing capacities are applied to the speech they hear, children have the innate means to construct a grammar of their native language (Slobin, 1973).

Whether or not a child is programmed with a full set of linguistic universals, as Chomsky suggests, or if (s)he comes equipped with special innate abilities for processing linguistic data, the child is likely to end up with the same set of linguistic universals that allows for progressive language development.

## Stages of Language Development

It is clear that a child does not learn a language "all-at-once." Language is acquired in stages of increasing complexity with each stage more closely approximating the grammar of the adult language. Observations of children in different language areas of the world reveal that the stages are very similar and possibly universal.

Children demonstrate comprehension of the language long before their first utterance. A child responds correctly to such commands as "Pick up the ball" or "Point to your nose" or "Get the book" without being able to produce these utterances. Sometime after their first year children begin to produce single words. At this point, they have learned that sounds are related to meaning. These first words are usually linked with the child's own action or desire for action. For example, "Up" for "Pick me up" or "Carry me," and single words such as "dog" or "juice" convey desires or basic needs. Because children at this stage can comprehend much more than they can produce themselves, it is not possible to determine the extent of the knowledge of the grammar that the child possesses merely by observing or noting speech production.

Around the end of the second year, children begin to produce two-word utterances such as "Mommy book." When a child starts stringing more than two words together, the number of words can vary. Words used are usually those that carry the main message, or the "content" words. Because it often sounds like a Western Union message, these utterances are called telegraphic speech: "No sit there" or "Cat stand up table" (Brown, 1973).

Table 1 summarizes the development of language in children from four months to six years of age.

## Influence of the Environment

If human communication is innate, what difference does environment make? Children must be exposed to speech in order for speech to develop. A child will not learn unless there are models around from which (s)he can learn. Children must receive language input from their caretakers and other speakers of the language. Caretakers adapt their language in order to accomplish meaningful communication with the child. They use shorter, simpler sentences than in adult communication. They rely heavily on concrete, contextual support; they often repeat and exaggerate intonation. The content of caretaker speech to young children tends to focus heavily on the here and now, and on activities presented in the environment as they interact. For example:

- Child: Mommy eat juice.
- Caretaker: Yes, Mommy is drinking juice.
- Child: Billy juice.
- Caretaker: You want some juice?
- Child: Yeah, Billy firsty.
- Caretaker: You're thirsty, hmmm? Well, here's some juice for you.

The caretaker responds to the meaning and not the form of the child's communication. The child is not corrected in his or her efforts to communicate. There is no explicit instruction of language rules. Even if we could teach grammar to children, there is no evidence that it would significantly improve the rate of their acquisition or their communication skills. A child's language acquisition is an unconscious process; the child is not aware of the rules (s)he possesses.

Children are active participants in the process of acquiring language. Their cognitive and language development is a strongly interactive process that depends not only on specific linguistic and cognitive mechanisms, but also on their participation in a rich linguistic environment that is attuned to their communicative needs. In conclusion, current first language acquisition theory supports the following beliefs about children's language learning.

- The whole of language is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Language learning in not the result of having mastered tiny, discrete "skills" or "habits."
- Language use begins with a function and then involves experimenting with the language forms necessary to fulfill that function.
- Willingness to accept approximations (errors) is essential to the processes which accompany language learning. Given time and opportunity, the child's immature forms will drop out and be replaced by conventional ones.
- The language to which young language learners are exposed is always meaningful and in a context which makes some kind of sense.

### *Program Example*

Current trends in early childhood education programs are to nurture the language experiences between child and caretaker by giving caretakers education, encouragement, and support to facilitate the natural evaluation of the child's language in a wholesome environment. Headstart and Early Childhood Home Visitor Programs are doing a lot in oral language development in Native and second languages.

## *What is the Relationship Between First (L1) and Second (L2) Language Acquisition?*

Second language acquisition theorists have gained important insight and direction for research from studies in first language acquisition. Current perspectives on second language teaching have evolved from theories that have integrated models of how a child learns his or her first language. Specifically, three topics will be explored in response to the above question:

## Second Language Acquisition Theory

Research conducted during the last 20 years supports that there are many similarities between first and second language acquisition. For example, children and second language speakers use shorter utterances composed of heavy content items first, and slowly progress to longer and more syntactically complex utterances. Second language learners frequently overgeneralize as do first language learners, regularizing the exception forms in the language, e.g., "goed," "taked." In addition, the same characteristics of a successful first language learning environment have been identified as present in the language learning environment of those students who have successfully mastered the second language. Language in a meaningful con-

text, focusses on meaning and a low-anxiety learning environment.

Krashen (1982) has developed a model of second language acquisition that has greatly influenced second language teaching methodologies in recent years. In support of the similarities between first and second language acquisition, he theorizes that acquisition is a subconscious process by which one develops linguistic ability through exposure and interaction with the language. Krashen makes a distinction between acquisition and learning. Learning a language, on the other hand, is the result of conscious attention given to the rules and forms of the language. He suggests that conscious learning has a very limited function in language performance, that is to say, our formal knowledge of a second language, the rules we have learned in class and from texts, is not responsible for fluency. What is responsible for ultimate fluency is receiving messages (input) that are comprehensible or in a comprehensible context in an environment which promotes low anxiety levels, low-risk and non-corrective participation, similar to that in which children acquire their first language.

Krashen hypothesizes that language is acquired by understanding input (i) that is a little beyond a person's current level of acquired competence (+1). This accounts for what Krashen calls the silent period in informal second language acquisition. This is a period of time when the acquirer may say very little but is building up competence by active listening via comprehensible input (i+1), a prerequisite that triggers the whole process of second language acquisition: the message must be understood before acquisition can take place. When the message is understood, then structures that are a little beyond the current level of competence of the learner are ready to be acquired.

## Socio-Affective Factors in $L_2$ Development

Second language learners are greatly influenced by attitudes they have developed toward the second language and its speakers. If the learner is highly motivated to learn the second language and actively seeks interaction with native speakers, (s)he is likely to experience greater success in acquiring the second language. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis states that there are affective variables related to second language acquisition. A low filter means that the learner is more "open" to the input, allowing the input to be more easily internalized. A high filter suggests attitudes that will inhibit the acquisition process. Learners who are motivated to learn the second language and who have a high self-image have been identified as more successful acquirers of the second language. In addition, this hypothesis supports the notion that the best environment for second language acquisition is one which promotes low-anxiety levels in a non-corrective, low-risk climate, similar to that in which children acquire their first language.

## The Second Language Environment

The language that learners hear and see around them is very important to the acquisition process (Krashen, 1982). Four qualifying features are identified:

- Naturalness of the environment. This is the degree to which the focus of communication is on content and not form.
- The learner's role in communication. Studies support that one-way (learner listens but does not respond verbally) and restricted two-way communication (learner listens and responds, but the response is usually nonverbal or in the native language) benefit the acquisition process. Also, delaying oral practice or observing a "silent period" until learners are ready to speak in the new language is considered to be more productive to the acquisition process.
- Availability of concrete referents. These are subjects, events, or activities that can be seen, heard, or felt while they are being talked about.
- Target language models. The acquisition of the second language is affected by the learner's choice of model. Research supports that learners would prefer to speak with peers over teachers, peers over parents, and members of one's own ethnic group over nonmembers.

### *Program Example*

Bilingual programs and Indian education programs throughout the country are utilizing second language acquisition techniques that address socio-affective factors and the qualifying features of a second language environment.

## *What is the Distinction Between Language Learning and Language Acquisition?*

As a result of current directions in second language acquisition theory, consideration has been given to the distinction between the two modes of gaining competence in a second language: lan-

guage learning and language acquisition. As discussed above, Krashen suggests that these are two independent systems for developing competence in a second language. The differences between these two modes will now be defined along with a brief discussion of the role of formal language instruction in an academic setting.

## Language Learning

Language learning is formal knowledge about a language; explicit knowledge of rules and structure that is taught in English classes. In a language learning environment, there is a conscious effort on the part of the learner to know the language, to be able to describe the rules governing its use, to commit these rules to memory, and finally, to apply them in order to generate grammatically correct utterances. An example of this is the conscious learning of the parts of speech such as noun, verb, pronoun, and the conscious analysis of the rules that control their order in a sentence (subject, verb, adjective: He is tall). The learner is presented with the linguistic features (the grammar) of the target language. Control of each of these features is considered important and viewed as fundamental to the learner's language capability. Language components are often isolated as a skill for deliberate study and practice in a language lesson. Error correction, deliberate attention to the structure of the language, and repeated practice of common language forms are all consistent with the instructional focus of a "learning" environment.

## Language Acquisition

An acquisition-oriented language environment supports the belief that language evolves slowly through a series of proficiency stages very similar to how children learn their first language. At each stage, the learner/acquirer interacts with comprehensible language-use situations. The result is that language forms are internalized unconsciously.

> Children...are not necessarily aware that they are acquiring language, they are only aware that they are communicating. The results of language acquisition, acquired linguistic competence, are also unconscious. (Krashen, Terrell, 1983)

Krashen suggests that language acquisition is the "natural" way to develop linguistic ability. In an acquisition environment, language development resembles natural language progression and results from actual meaningful use in an environment that is low-anxiety and comfortable to the learner. At all times, the emphasis of instruction is on communication and meaning.

- The Acquisition-Learning Distinction

- Acquisition
  - Similar to children's first language
  - "Picking up" a language
  - Subconscious
  - Implicit knowledge
- Learning
  - Formal knowledge of a language acquisition
  - "Knowing about" a language
  - Conscious
  - Explicit knowledge (Krashen, 1981)

Acquisition, therefore, is the unconscious formulation of grammatical principles, while learning is the conscious, cognitive-based study of grammar. In the past, most language classrooms were focused on grammar-based approaches that emphasized explanation rather than acquisition. Examples of such approaches included the grammar-translation method and the audio-lingual approach. In recent times, however, the trend has changed more toward the use of approaches that facilitate acquisition of the second language such as the Natural Approach and Total Physical Response (TPR), both of which will be discussed later.

## The Role of Formal Language Instruction

It is important to note that the most current research in second language development supports the view that acquisition and learning are both important to the process of gaining competence in a second language. As Native children become more involved in the educational system and environment, they must be prepared to undertake academic tasks, the success of which is largely dependent upon formal instruction in the English language. Instruction must be given in developing competence in reading and writing, for example. In addition, attention must be given to vocabulary development because research has shown that it has a direct relationship to students' academic achievement in reading and in content areas (Saville-Troike, 1984).

Many current studies (Long, 1983) have shown that formal language instruction often benefits older English as a second language (ESL) learners because of their advanced cognitive development. There are many researchers in the field who

strongly feel that learning about the grammar of a second language can enhance the acquisition process. Perhaps, as McLaughlin (1987) suggests, "it may be more fruitful to admit that correction and grammar teaching can help stimulate change and can lead to a different state in the acquisition process. Rather than looking on grammar teaching merely as a way of improving the monitoring abilities of the learner, it seems reasonable to see correction and grammar teaching as providing a short cut for learners. This is not to subscribe to language teaching methods that rely heavily on grammar teaching. But it does suggest that there is a role for correction and grammar teaching in language instruction."

While activities may be more limited in their use with beginning students and in the development of communicative competence, many in the field feel that learning and acquisition are transferable systems that can work together to reinforce one another (Higgs, 1985; Bailystok, 1978).

### *Program Example*

In an effort to increase self-esteem and foster a positive self-image many schools with Native students have ascribed to a non-corrective/acquisition approach to language arts. Transitioning from a "home" language to academic English is difficult enough without the constant stress of being corrected in pronunciation or grammatical usage.

## Current Perspective on Second Language Instruction

Some of the instructional perspectives that have evolved out of consideration given to current second language acquisition theory are as follows.

### *What is the Comprehension Approach?*

Recent investigation in theoretical linguistics and child language acquisition, as well as experimentation in second language instruction indicate the primary role of comprehension in the acquisition of language. Teaching rules to language students has been a standard teaching practice. In recent times, however, the belief that students can acquire a second language in essentially the same way as they acquired their first language has motivated language researchers to develop instructional formats that model this first language acquisition process. Great emphasis is placed on initial listening activities. The students hear sentences in the second language for which the meaning is clearly indicated through actions or pictures. The umbrella term for this instructional system is the Comprehension Approach. This approach is based upon the belief that conversational fluency will develop as a result of first learning to understand the second language.

### Definition of the Comprehension Approach

There is a common set of beliefs that defines the Comprehension Approach:

- Language rules are most easily and accurately acquired by inference.
- Language acquisition is primarily an implicit process.
- Language acquisition is viewed as non-linear.
- Speaking will develop given sufficient comprehension training.
- The instructional focus is on teaching meaning through comprehension activities in a relaxed, stress-free environment.
- Comprehension is a teaching routine through which students are systematically exposed to the sentences in the second language.
- Language production is not taught directly through drills, forced imitation, or modeling.
- Language use is encouraged by providing interesting and motivating communicative interactions.
- Understanding a language is the primary channel through which language is acquired. (Winitz, 1981)

### Importance of Meaning in the Comprehension Approach

This approach places highest priority on the students experiencing the meaningfulness of the linguistic input presented in the classroom. Comprehension and production are viewed as active processes that guide the students to an internalization of the phonological, syntactic, and semantic systems of the second language. Language learning is seen as a problem-solving process through which the learners figure out how the language works on the basis of meaningful utterances that they hear or see.

## Example of Comprehension Methodology

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a methodology that has incorporated many of the tenets of the Comprehension Approach. TPR provides meaningful input via commands that the student performs with his or her body (e.g., "Walk to the board") during which time the student is not expected to produce utterances in the second language.

## *What is Communicative Language Teaching?*

The Communicative Approach incorporates many of the tenets of the Comprehension Approach but is more extensive. It supports an interactive, communicative view of language development.

The Communicative Approach stresses activities that place emphasis on learning language appropriate to a given social situation. It maintains that in order to be communicatively competent, the student needs to have knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions of language. Students must be guided to choose the most appropriate forms of communication given the social context. It is the social context of the communicative event that gives meaning to the utterance. Some assumptions of this approach are:

- Children learn language as a medium of communication rather than as a curriculum subject with sets of isolated topics, facts, or skills. Language proficiency is defined as a speaker's successful accomplishment of his or her communicative intentions across a wide variety of social settings.
- Becoming a successful communicator in the second language is synonymous with becoming "literate" in that language. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are best developed simultaneously.
- Children learn how to communicate successfully through purposeful interaction in the second language environment and in a wide variety of contexts.
- Children's second language development is a holistic process. Children use all their available resources: linguistic, non-linguistic, internal (cognitive affective), and external (social, environmental) to become successful second language communicators.
- Children's second language development is facilitated by a comfortable classroom atmosphere in which the focus is on the meaning of the utterances rather than on the form used to say them. Errors are viewed as a normal part of the acquisition process.
- Communicative abilities depend not so much on the time spent in rehearsing grammatical patterns, but rather on the opportunities given to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in real-life situations. (Savignon, 1983)

The Communicative Approach defines "competence" as the ability to function in an authentic communicative situation setting. It supports the belief that an analysis of the learner's needs and interests provides the most effective basis for materials development. True communication is a purposeful use of authentic materials.

## *What is the Holistic or Integrated Perspective on Language Learning?*

The Holistic Approach to language learning is based on specific convictions about how and when students learn best. Many of the ideas discussed above are very similar to the holistic perspective. This perspective can perhaps be more appropriately identified as a philosophy of learning in general. While it has been discussed specifically in the literature in the context of language and literacy development, many educators feel it can apply to any learning. This philosophy incorporates the following key theoretical assumptions:

Individuals learn best when:

- They are supported by other learners.
- They are invited to take risks.
- Their learning environment provides safety nets to sustain them through failure as well as success.
- They are personally involved in decisions about their own learning.
- They are encouraged to take an active role in the learning process.
- What they learn is meaningful to them.
- They want to learn.
- They enjoy learning.

## Instructional Implications

These assumptions provide the foundation around which much current second language instruction is being designed. This instruction includes activities that:

- Present language as a whole believing that the whole of language is greater than the

sum of its parts. Language is never approached as something to be broken down and taught as tiny, discrete "skills" or "habits" to be developed.

- Generate comprehensible, interesting, and useful classroom language, i.e., "real" language, recognizing that this kind of language is most helpful to students in their language development.
- Develop language as part of a broader process of meaning-making development. This is accomplished by integrating the processes of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and believing that the development of one process supports the development of the others.
- Recognize that the new language learner brings a variety of resources to use in their second language development, including a diversity of prior native language and cultural experiences.
- Use the second language in many different settings, with a wide variety of people and for a wide variety of purposes.
- Facilitate a comfortable environment: one that values, encourages, and celebrates efforts to use the language; that focuses primarily on the meaning and intention of the utterances and messages rather than on their form; and that treats errors as a normal part of becoming an increasingly more proficient language user. (Enright, McCloskey, 1988)

### *Program Example*

It is important to focus at this point on why it is necessary to understand second language acquisition for Native students. In those instances where students only speak a Native language and do not speak English, it is obvious why. However, it is not so obvious if it appears that students are speaking "sub-standard" English. In reality, it is possible that these students are not speaking "sub-standard" English, but are speaking "Indian-English" (Leap, 1982). In other words, the words may be English, but the grammar may be from the tribal language used in the home or community. The tendency in dealing with a "sub-standard" version of English is to "correct" it. As stated above, it is recommended that correcting be kept to a minimum.

There are many schools that use the Comprehension and Communitive Approaches for all students, but in those cases where there are non-English speaking or Indian-English speaking, it is necessary to use these approaches.

## The Natural Approach to Second Language Teaching

The Natural Approach is a teaching methodology that has come to receive enthusiastic support by ESL instructors in recent years.

### *What is the Natural Approach?*

The chief aim of the Natural Approach is to focus on the meanings of genuine communications in an atmosphere that brings anxiety down to a minimum. It is an instructional strategy used with beginning language students and has the goal of helping them to become intermediate students (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). The Natural Approach believes that:

- Comprehension precedes production.
- Students can internalize language structures without producing them.
- Oral responses will occur when the student is ready to make them.
- Students will display greater development in comprehension skills, as well as in speaking activities, if an atmosphere exists in the classroom that allows and encourages a wide "threshold of error" at all times. Correction, where it occurs, is indirect through expansion or reiteration.
  - Example: Student: "Boy play dog."
  - Teacher: "Yes, the boy is playing with the dog."

Natural Approach instructors believe that the purpose of the classroom is for acquisition activities that allow for the development of communicative abilities through natural acquisition processes. Acquisition does not happen through traditional grammar exercises or drills because these activities provide no opportunity for meaningful communication. This is why the curriculum of a Natural Approach classroom consists of communication goals. For example, a goal might be to talk about what the students did over the weekend. In the activities that are used to achieve a particular goal, the necessary tools (vocabulary and structure) are supplied. However, the "focus of the students during the activity must be maintained on the semantic content (in this case, the weekend activities), not the grammatical form (here, past tense)" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

## *What are the Stages of the Natural Approach?*

The Natural Approach identifies three stages of development in language acquisition.

### Comprehension

This is the period of time when students "tune in" to the new language, getting a sense of the way it sounds and fits together. It corresponds to what Krashen has labeled "the silent period." During this time, the student is learning how to make intelligent guesses.

### Early Speech Production

The transition to this stage occurs after students have developed a passive vocabulary of about 500 words. Typical responses will be yes/no in reply to a simple question: "Is this a pineapple?" or identification of items that have been introduced several times: "What is this? What color are the grapes?"

### Speech Emergence

At this stage, the sentences that the students produce become longer, more complex, and include a wider range of vocabulary. Students are able to speak in complete sentences and engage in dialogue and discussion.

## *What are Teaching Strategies and Activities Appropriate to Each Stage?*

### Comprehension

#### *Using Total Physical Response (TPR)*

TPR is an instructional approach that has been identified as very effective at the comprehension stage of the Natural Approach. TPR requires active physical involvement on the part of the learner in response to commands, such as "Stand up," "Walk to the desk," and "Turn on the light." Commands are used to manipulate the orientation, location, and locomotion of the learner's entire body, and become increasingly more complex and novel as the learner is able to demonstrate physical comprehension of the command. An example is: "Hop to the board and draw a picture of a monster." It is believed that this active involvement of the body with the language provides immediate "comprehensible input" of the message.

TPR presents an approach to second language learning that is based on a model of how children learn their first language: The child spends many months listening and interacting with the environment, trying to make sense out of the sounds going on around him or her. No one tells the baby when it must speak. The child chooses to speak when (s)he is ready. Accordingly, TPR theorizes that speech cannot be directly taught to students, just as a parent (caretaker) cannot directly teach the infant to talk. In addition, just as the child learned his or her first language in a stress-free environment, the environment in the second language classroom must also be stress-free. TPR activities should be enjoyable so that the learners feel at ease at all times.

Steps in a TPR Lesson:

- Teacher prepares "script" of TPR commands that may focus on a particular objective, such as students becoming familiar with the items in the classroom.
  - Example "Stand up."
  - "Go to the board."
  - "Touch the chalkboard."
  - "Pick up the chalk."
- The teacher provides the auditory stimulus, giving the command and simultaneously modeling the action so that the input is immediately comprehensible.
  - Example: Teacher says: "Stand up and pick up the chalk."
  - Teacher models standing up.
  - Students stand up and pick up the chalk with the teacher.
- The students demonstrate comprehension by carrying out the command.
  - Example: Teacher says: "Stand up and pick up the chalk."
  - Teacher does not model the action.
  - The students stand up and pick up the chalk.

Initially, the teacher, as "caretaker," directs all student behavior. At some point, usually after 10 - 20 hours of instruction (Asher, 1982), students will be "ready to speak." Then there will be a role reversal with individual students directing the teacher and other students.

#### *Using Context, Gestures and Other Body Language.*

At the comprehension stage, directing attention to the physical characteristics of the students can provide for immediate comprehensible input. Students need only respond with names at this point:

- Example: Teacher: "What is your name?"
- Student: "Susan."
- Teacher: "Everyone look at Susan. Susan has short, curly hair." (Teacher uses context and gestures to clarify meaning of short, curly hair.)
- Teacher: "What is the name of the student with short, curly hair?"
- Class: "Susan."
- Teacher: "What is your name?" (Teacher chooses another student.)
- Student: "Judy."
- Teacher: "Look at Judy. Does Judy have short, curly hair?"

*Using Pictures*

Pictures can be very effectively used at the comprehension stage. The instructor describes the picture, emphasizing only the key lexical items. Each student is given a different picture. The teacher asks questions about the picture that can be answered by giving the name of the student holding the picture.

To summarize, the following student responses can be expected at the comprehension stage:

- Physical action
- Gesturing or nodding
- Saying "Yes" or "No"
- Saying the names of other students

## Early Speech Production

Speech opportunities at this stage, can consist of questions that require single word answers. These can evolve into either/or questions, e.g., "Is Susan's hair brown or blonde?" "Is Judy tall or short?" "What color is Susan's hair?" In addition, open-ended sentences can be presented, such as, "Susan's hair is _____ and _____ " or "I like _____."

At this stage, then, students can respond with:

- Yes/no answers
- One-word answers from either/or questions
- One-word answers from general questions or completion of open-ended sentences
- Two-word strings

## Speech Emergence

Effective acquisition activities during this period are:

- Games and recreation activities because they focus on language as a tool for reaching a goal rather than as a goal itself.
- Content-area activities that are interesting to the students such as science experiments.
- Humanistic-affective activities which appeal to the students on a personal level and explore students' ideas and feelings, in addition to their experiences. Again, the focus is on the message being conveyed and not on the form of the language used to convey it.
- Information problem-solving using charts, tables, graphs, and maps.

Students at the speech emergence stage can be expected to respond in the following ways:

- Three words and/or short phrases
- Longer phrases
- Complete sentences
- Dialogue
- Extended conversation

As with children learning their first language, the stages of the Natural Approach overlap: some utterances are more complex while others continue to be expressed simply.

Those using the Natural Approach believe that the function of the second language classroom is to promote the acquisition of the second language. The focus of all activities in the Natural Approach is on the content of the message being conveyed and not on the form. This approach seeks to facilitate an environment that is relaxed and interesting at all times and to provide activities that allow for immediate comprehensible input.

## *How are Students Assessed in the Natural Approach?*

Evaluating students' progress is a necessity in academic situations. Two kinds of language proficiency tests are recognized in second language assessment: tests of linguistic competence and tests of communicative competence in pronunciation, morphology, and syntax. Tests that measure communicative competence assess the ability to use language to achieve a particular purpose.

The goal for students is to eventually achieve both communicative and linguistic competence. The main thrust of the Natural Approach is com-

municative competence. In the beginning stages, therefore, preference is given to tests that evaluate the student's ability to understand and communicate ideas in specific situations.

### Speech Comprehension

In the Natural Approach, testing for the ability to comprehend speech is seen as particularly important since it reveals to what extent the "input" has been comprehensible. What is tested at the beginning levels is the developing ability to recognize key lexical items and to use context as a means for guessing meaning. One easy way to measure this ability is to present students with various pictures and then describe one of the pictures, asking the students to identify the one being described. Another technique is to make statements about pictures, items, or actions and to ask the students to judge whether they are true or false. As students develop into the single-word stage, simple questions can be asked: "What color is the little girl's hair?" or "How many people are in the picture?"

### Speech Production

Speech production is evaluated in beginning students only in terms of their ability to communicate ideas. The best way to prepare for such a test would be to participate in conversation. This is a difficult area to assess because it is almost impossible to set up real conversational situations in the classroom. The most widely used of oral exams is the oral interview in which the instructor asks open-ended questions in a relaxed, informal context but limited to the topics and situations with which the students have been dealing.

### Reading and Writing

Tests of reading and writing are given in Natural Approach classes if they relate to the goals and needs of the students. A reading test is one that tests readers on whether they have understood the main point or idea of the text and provides a variety of interesting topics. A writing test is appropriate if writing tasks are part of the goal of the class. Examples of such tasks include filling out forms, writing letters, writing personal narratives, and writing fiction or poetry.

Writing samples can be evaluated in several ways: they can be regarded holistically as an indication of what the student has acquired, that is, in terms of content and not in terms of the correctness of the linguistic features. Or they can be evaluated in terms of grammatical accuracy. In the latter situation, the writer should know ahead of time that (s)he will be writing, and that (s)he will be graded specifically on grammatical accuracy for rules that have been studied (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Those using the Natural Approach recommend that testing using written exams should not be used at beginning levels because its emphasis on grammatical features may inhibit the natural and more important development of language acquisition.

## The Relationship Between Academic Competency and Language Competency

### *What are the Academic Needs of Native Students?*

Native students need to develop the academic competence to compete successfully in the mainstream curriculum. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), constructs formulated by Cummins (1984) are both important to the second language student if (s)he is to succeed in an academic environment. The student must eventually have a command of the new language as it pertains to abstract thinking and problem solving. Schools require that the student have academic skills in addition to being able to cope with situations that are unique to the school environment. Research has shown that it takes as long as 5 to 7 years for a student to develop academic competence. Thus, even though a student may have a high level of communicative competence and interact in ways that suggest good second language comprehension, (s)he may be ill-prepared for the demands of the academic environment. The language demands made on second language learners in schools are diverse and varied in complexity. Students must learn to follow schedules, use textbooks, solve math problems, spell words, do grammar exercises, and define vocabulary words, to name but a few. Because schools require literacy skills and the ability to deal with decontextualized information, academic competency may be more difficult to specify than communicative competency. In recent years, however, instructional strategies have emerged that foster the development of second language skills through teaching modified subject matter content. It is felt that this content approach helps students to achieve academic competence, or "the ability to learn through English, rather than the ability to merely communicate in English" (Chamot, 1985). A discussion of content-based second language instructional approaches and relationship between academic competency and second language competency follows.

### *What is the Instructional Approach?*

#### Goal

Content-based second language Instructional Approaches are viewed as most effective in developing a student's conceptual knowledge and academic competence. These approaches to second language development have the goal of developing both second language skills and academic concepts appropriate to the student's grade level. Both content and language teaching are formally incorporated into the Instructional Approach. Basic academic content can be taught using many of the approaches already discussed. For example, Total Physical Response could be used to teach math skills (Draw a hexagon; divide it in half with a vertical line). The Natural Approach and its extensions can be used to demonstrate how to make a specific meal or how to blend paints for an art project. The activities must make greater and greater demands on the students' cognitive abilities in order that they gain academic competence.

#### Focus of Instruction

A content area that is intrinsically interesting will more successfully motivate students than studying language for its own sake. Specifically, vocabulary and technical terms associated with the subject (math, science, social studies, etc.) need to be taught. In addition, language functions required for academic communication such as informing, explaining, classifying, and evaluating, need to be presented to the student. Other language skills that should be stressed in the classroom are those used for different academic functions; for example, listening comprehension for academic explanations, reading for information, speaking for oral presentations, and writing for reports (Chamot, 1985). Teaching English through the content uses primarily a cognitive approach blended with a content-based language development curriculum. The focus is on the communication of meaning through a second language rather than on drill and practice of grammatical forms. This approach places emphasis on small group activities where students can participate in cooperative problem-solving learning situations.

Teaching English through the content is considered a more cognitive than communicative approach to second language learning because the focus is more on the functions underlying academic and linguistic competence as opposed to the functions underlying socio-linguistic competence. The Communicative Approach emphasizes the development of listening and speaking that will allow the second language learner to interact in a socially appropriate way in a variety of contexts in the second language. The Cognitive or Content Approach stresses the development of academic language skills in order to allow the second language learner to access the mainstream curriculum of the school.

## Reading and the Native Student

Three questions are important as we address the teaching of reading to Native students:

### *What is the Reading Process?*

In order to understand what happens when a student picks up a text and attempts to "read," it is helpful to examine three factors:

#### Nature of the Text

Texts carry a message from authors to readers by means of written language. The message reflects the author's schema or prior knowledge and experience with a particular topic. The sophistication of the language chosen by the author will determine the readability of the text.

##### *Language*

An author selects language with which to communicate the intended message. Once the message is determined by an author, the thoughts that communicate these meanings are recorded in the words (lexicon) and the order of words (syntax) that the author chooses to communicate these meanings. This lexicon and syntax may vary in difficulty from that which is common and simple to that which is abstract and complex. For example, in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, the statement "Scrooge gave no Christmas presents," has vocabulary that is concrete and the sentence structure is simple. However, in the sentence, "His inability to recognize Christmas with gifts was indicative of Scrooge's selfishness," the vocabulary (lexicon) and the sentence structure (syntax) are more abstract and complex. The text is a direct reflection of the author's language, including the author's skill in communicating via the written form of the English language.

##### *Schema*

In order to define schema as it relates to the text, it will be helpful first to define schema as it relates to people. Schema can be defined as the thoughts that come to mind when you hear or read language. These thoughts form pictures that we

associate with particular words or concepts. We have a schema for objects such as paper and books, for places such as schools and gardens, for abstract ideas such as love and hate, for actions such as running and dancing, and for events such as parties and garage sales. Schema is an accumulation of the reader's knowledge about a given topic. It is the reader's prior knowledge, organized and interrelated to everything the reader knows about a specific word or concept.

For example, when the reader sees the word "library," thoughts or images may come to mind that reflect what the reader knows about libraries from personal experience. These images may include the library building where the reader can go to read books or the reader's favorite place to read while at the library. The reader may also know that when books are checked out they must be returned by the due date if a fine is to be avoided. The reader's knowledge about libraries can be called his or her "content schema" for libraries. The word "library" may also bring to mind a particular role or behavior the reader performs while at the library. The reader's ability to follow the sequence of steps necessary to locate a book and check it out are part of the reader's "script schema" for libraries. Another image that may come to the reader's mind may reflect the way a library is organized. This knowledge and experience with the Dewey decimal system is part of the reader's "structure schema" for libraries.

Just as readers have schema based on their prior experiences, so do authors. The author's schema becomes an integral part of the text and helps communicate his or her message. Text schema can also be divided into the categories of content, script, and structure.

- Content Schema. The information in the author's message (major ideas, important concepts, main information, central images, and crucial topics) all constitute the content schema of a reading selection. The explanations and interpretations of content schema can range from the concrete to the more abstract.

For example, *A Christmas Carol* can be said to be "a story about a miserly, stingy, and cruel old man who refused to celebrate Christmas." This would be a more concrete example of content schema, or the content schema can be said to be the moral statements: "Stingy people are lonely people" or "There is more to life than money." These are examples of more abstract content schema.

- Script Schema. Every person has specific roles or scripts that they perform daily at an unconscious level. These roles or scripts have been learned as a result of repeated experiences within the culture. One common script is shopping for clothes. Actions are organized around looking at clothing displays, asking to use a dressing room, trying on merchandise, and purchasing selected items. As children, we learn numerous scripts by modeling adults and peers. Scripts in communication allow us to leave out boring details as we are talking or writing, and insert them as we are listening or reading. A script can be defined as "a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation." The author assigns scripts to the characters in a story. The characters behave in certain prescribed ways. The scripts the author includes in his or her message will be scripts from the author's experiences or knowledge.
- Structure Schema. The particular organizational pattern of the message is termed structure schema (sometimes "story grammar"). *A Christmas Carol* has a beginning, middle, and end section: (1) Scrooge is portrayed as a cruel, miserly person unwilling to celebrate Christmas; (2) Scrooge sees himself as he appears to others; (3) Scrooge changes and becomes a pleasant, caring and sharing individual. This is a typical English language structure schema. Schema is an important concept to consider when looking at a particular text. The text schema reflects the author's prior knowledge and experience, including the "content" of the message, the "scripts" performed by the characters, and the "structure" of the author's message.

### *Readability*

Directly related to the language of the text is the text readability. Does the text require the reader to have sophisticated reading skills in order to unlock meaning? The following sentences, for example, may well be understood by an "average" English speaking six-year-old, if they were read to the child in the context of a story:

- This dog can run fast.
- The greyhound is an animal used for racing because of its quick speed.

However, if these sentences occur in the context of a story the child is expected to read without assistance, the latter will cause greater difficulty. The young reader may not have been introduced to

the reading skills necessary to decipher the text. When selecting reading material for students, it is important to consider the readability of the material.

## Nature of the Reader

The reader also brings language and schema to the reading situation. In addition, the reader brings reading skills that allow him or her to decipher the written symbols used to record language. The reader's language, schema, and reading skills interact and influence each other as the reader actively searches for meaning.

### *Language*

Native students enter our schools with language that has been an integral part of their personal identity; language that has been a vehicle for helping them interact with loved ones, peers, and community members. The language of the student may be other than English, or include English and another of the many languages spoken by the diverse Native populations of the United States.

Native students bring varying degrees of English language development to the reading situation. The English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing have been influenced by a variety of factors including:

- Age of the student
- Time exposed to the English language
- Home, school, and community environment
- First language of the home
- Educational levels of the student and the parents
- Influence of family and peers

Although the student may demonstrate the English oral language skills necessary to communicate in the day-to-day interactions at home and on the playground, the child may not have acquired the academic language found in our schools. This academic language often appears in the reading selections assigned to the student and may be very different from the English language brought by the student into the classroom environment. The student does not enter school devoid of language. The student's language, at whatever level of development, provides a bridge from the known to the unknown. By respecting and valuing this language, and therefore incorporating it into reading instruction, the reading teacher increases the opportunities for success.

### *Schema*

The student also brings all his or her current knowledge and experience to the reading situation. The reader has schema for "content," "scripts," and "structure."

- Content Schema. A student's content schema includes all of his or her current knowledge and information. It is the student's understanding of the world. In reading *A Christmas Carol*, a student's content schema may include his or her awareness of the expected sharing that occurs during the Christmas season. It may not include an understanding of Christmas as celebrated in England in Dicken's time or at the present. The historical perspective, the relationship between employers and employees, the role of conscience in literature, etc., all constitute the content schema activated in a student as *A Christmas Carol* is read. Likewise, if the celebration of Christmas is not a part of the student's experience, the student may have difficulty under standing the story's message unless (s)he has a similar schema for giving and receiving that can be activated and used to provide meaning.
- Script Schema. The reader has numerous scripts that (s)he has learned. These scripts are dependent upon the roles the child has been given or has observed others performing in the home, school, and community; i.e., the script for "getting dressed in the morning," "eating meals," and "getting ready for bed." Without a script, some new experiences are totally incomprehensible. Scripts vary from culture to culture and depend upon the socio-economic status, lifestyle, and age of the reader.
- Structure Schema. In addition, students bring with them a manner of organizing their world, a structure schema. Prior storytelling or other reading experiences may have provided them with a pattern for organizing reading material that is culturally influenced. They use this structure schema for anticipating the type of information to expect in various parts of a story. In approaching the reading of *A Christmas Carol*, the students may have an understanding of an expected story line. When the students have heard or read this story previously, following the plot development can be relatively easy. The more often the

students have read or heard stories similar in structure to *A Christmas Carol*, the easier it will be for them to comprehend the narrative.

### *Reading Skills*

The student's ability to decode written symbols also influences the search for meaning. The reader uses many strategies to decipher the text, including phonics, structural analysis, and context clues. When the decoding requirements of the text exceed the skills possessed by the reader, (s)he faces an undecipherable language from which no meaning can be obtained.

## Interaction between Reader and Text

When a reader and a text interact, the encounter may produce a variety of results. A positive encounter may produce feelings of joy, excitement, interest, insight, and success; a negative encounter may evoke feelings of boredom, confusion, uncertainty, frustration, and failure. The positive results we desire for our students are dependent upon an important function of reading-comprehension. In order for comprehension to take place, the reader must make sense out of the author's message. Understanding occurs when there is a positive interaction between the language, schema and readability of the text, and the language, schema, and reading skills of the reader.

Readers approach print with a degree of uncertainty about the author's message. As they begin reading, they make predictions about the author's message based on their own language and schema. Authors are incapable of writing without omitting some information, description, or content. Readers fill in the gaps from their own experiences, check to see if their predictions make sense, and then integrate the message into their own concept of reality.

Reading is an interactive problem-solving process in which the reader predicts, confirms, and integrates meaning gleaned from the text into his or her world. When the language, schema, and readability of the text is very different from the language, schema, and reading skills of the reader, comprehension is limited at best.

The match between the text and the reader need never be a perfect one. Reading situations, by their nature, result in changes in the student's language, schema, and reading skills as the reader is exposed to new information. Reading activates language development, broadens schema, and provides an opportunity to practice and improve reading skills. However, when the differences between the text and the experience of the student are too great, comprehension is lost and reading does not take place.

## *What is Unique About the Native Student Reader?*

The Native student may face three major impediments which can slow learning to read in English.

## Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Limited English proficient or "LEP" is a term used to describe a person from a language minority population with less than native proficiency in English. A "LEP student" is a language minority student who enters the school system at a level of English proficiency less than that acquired by his or her native English speaking peers, which means that this student usually has limited skills in listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing in English. These students most often come from homes where the primary language is not English but is an American Indian and Alaska Native language. On the other hand, however, these students may come from a home where a language that is a combination of English and an American Indian and Alaska Native language are being spoken. Often times the words may seem to be English but the structure or grammar are derived from the Native language (Leap, 1979). This phenomenon has been characterized as "Reservation English" or "Village English" depending upon whether it is used in the "Lower 48" or in Alaska. This group does not usually include bilingual students who are fluent in English and their native tongue, or students who are English dominant (Ovando and Collier, 1985).

The English proficiency of the Native student may range from minimal or nonexistent competence, to near fluency. The language (s)he is capable of understanding and using in English may establish an upper limit to comprehension of the text. Likewise, the LEP student may possess a vocabulary and language that varies from that encountered in the text. When a selection contains language including vocabulary, grammatical forms, and syntax beyond the experience of the student, the text will contain little or no meaning for the reader. For example, when a student's characteristic productive oral language is similar to the following: "Scrooge went home after work"; and the text primarily contains structures like: "When the Ghost of Christmas Past appeared, Scrooge was struck by fear of this strange apparition," the discrepancy may be so great as to impede comprehension of the language of the text. Students

cannot be expected to read and understand text that is written in a language that is too different from their own. When this difference is substantial, students often cope with the lesson by concentrating their efforts on decoding words while limiting their attention to the comprehension of the author's meaning.

While language is a major concern in helping the language minority students learn to read, it is by no means the only factor that needs to be addressed.

## Lack of Experiences with Text Schema

We know that as students read, they impose meanings from prior learning and experiences in an attempt to understand what the author has written. While language minority students are not devoid of experiences, they can be expected to have difficulty comprehending text written about content for which they lack familiarity. A language minority student's experiences and knowledge may or may not be different from the experiences written about in the text. If a student lacks an understanding of 19th century England (the setting of a particular historical fiction story), (s)he may anticipate and impose meaning which is quite different from the message the author intended to convey.

If the characters in the stories have roles or scripts unfamiliar to the reader, (s)he will have difficulty getting meaning from the story. For example, if a story portrays a humorous interaction between the main character and a waiter in a restaurant, the reader will need to understand the script for eating in a restaurant or the meaning will be lost. Likewise, a student's familiarity with text structure may be divergent from that followed by the author in organizing the written discourse.

American Indian and Alaska Native languages possess structures quite different from English. These structures influence the thought patterns of the Native speakers of these languages. Coupled with the oral traditions of the culture, these thought patterns determine the text structure of discourse or stories. Native students are familiar with the structure schema of the stories they have heard in their homes since birth. In analyzing *A Christmas Carol*, we found that the story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is common that many Native stories have four parts: a beginning; middle A: middle B; and an end. Furthermore, it is possible that each part has subparts determined by cultural values and traditions.

Kaplan (1966) has identified five thought patterns employed by writers as they construct discourse. Each of these patterns reflects a cultural tradition that imposes differentiated expectations for the organization or development of logic in a written piece. When the student's expectations of text structure vary from that which they encounter, comprehension will be less than that expected. On the other hand, when there is a consistency between the logical development of structure found in a text and that anticipated by the reader, comprehension increases.

- In the Western European and American pattern of discourse, a linear straightforward manner of writing occurs with elements of text structure sequentially arranged and built upon in a cumulative manner from beginning to end. The reader is led logically and directly to a conclusion through the discourse.
- In contrast, an Asian pattern of discourse would be circular, with the major thesis never stated directly. In this type of development, content is arranged so as to hint at the major point intended by the author, without it ever being developed directly.
- In romance culture writing, thought processes indirectly through a digression before it finally works its way around to developing its major point.
- Semitic writing is characterized by digressions, seeming contradictions, reversals in development, all eventually worked toward an ultimate conclusion.
- Russian discourse contains many subordinate ideas that digress from the central idea of a paragraph.

Students coming from a cultural tradition where thought progresses through a logic unlike that developed in Western prose may have difficulty predicting the sequence of meaning as arranged by the author.

## Limited Reading Skills

Language minority students may face a third impediment to success with English reading, namely an inability to decipher written English. This problem manifests itself differently if the student is a non reader, than when the reader is a reader of another language but not skilled in English reading.

Nonreaders may lack the awareness needed for initial reading instruction. Involved in this awareness is a conscious ability to reflect on and talk about language. Understanding concepts such as "words," "phrases," "sentences," "sounds," and

others have been found related to initial reading success.

A related problem is inexperience with print. Beginning students need to understand that print used in reading materials symbolizes language. Moreover, printed language is generally more complex. Limited English proficient students, like all others learning to read English, need to develop "print awareness."

Even those students who have print awareness may have no understanding of the decoding process. This process constitutes an important, beginning step in developing independence in early reading. Students need word recognition strategies that they can apply in deciphering new or unknown words encountered in reading. This is formally called "decoding."

While inability to decode can be an impediment to success in English reading, it should be understood that identification of isolated sounds or fluency in pronunciation of words, do not by themselves fulfill the intent of reading instruction. While limited English proficient students will need decoding practice, it should not occur at the expense of reading for comprehension.

Readers of other languages who are unable to read in English, will need to become familiar with the English alphabet. Initially, students may attempt to attach the sound system from their Native language to the English alphabet. As they acquire English reading skills, they also need to be made aware of the many inconsistencies in the English sound-symbol relationships. Some students come from language backgrounds with relatively consistent sound-symbol relationships.

LEP students who read in their first language already have print awareness and many reading skills that are transferable to English such as use of context clues, reading for the main idea, sequencing events, making predictions, and some decoding skills, depending on the first language of the student. LEP students who are taught to read in their first language before being introduced to English reading, have an advantage over LEP students whose first encounter with reading is in English, a language that they are still struggling to acquire.

## *How Can We Facilitate Growth in Reading?*

Three factors influence growth in reading:

### English Language Development

Reading experiences are rich in their potential for fostering language growth. Students have opportunities in a reading lesson to create language to help them communicate their understanding to others, experience the language transmitted by an author, and listen to the language employed by teachers and peers. In the lesson, the LEP student's attention should be focused on the meaning communicated by the text, teachers, and peers. Likewise, teachers and peers need to focus on the meaning the student tries to convey rather than the accuracy (form) of his or her language.

Language can be used to receive new information, generate new thoughts, clarify new understanding, mediate misunderstandings or disagreements, articulate new ways of thinking, and relate new learning to students' lives. In other words, reading lessons can provide situations for language to be practiced with the focus on the meaning (function) of the language. In this way, development of the language capabilities so needed by the limited English proficient student can occur.

To provide reading lessons with a language focus, teachers must plan prereading activities that motivate students to talk. The teacher must find out what the student already knows about the key concepts or events central to the meaning of the story. An introductory language activity gives the teacher insight into the student's ability to understand and use the language that the student will soon encounter in printed form. Speaking can be stimulated through the introduction of concrete objects or visuals, the involvement of students in roleplaying situations, or through the interaction of a problem-solving game. The teacher introduces key words and concepts while the communicating activity allows the students the opportunity to practice using the language in a meaningful context.

### Activation of Student Schema

Research demonstrates that the ceiling on reading comprehension imposed by language limitations can be raised when LEP students are familiarized with the content, the script, and structure of the reading selection. Students can read and comprehend text written at a level higher than would be suggested by their limited language capabilities, when they are adequately prepared for it through activation of their content, script, and structure schema.

The students' content schema can be activated through prereading preparation. The students can be reminded of the knowledge or prior experiences related to the reading selection, or, a prereading experience can be planned to expose the students to the content of the reading they will be assigned. When the students' content schema is similar to that which they encounter in the text, comprehension is enhanced. For example, if the story content

is about a young girl trying to find good homes for her dog's puppies, it is essential that the LEP student understand the concept of "pet." In some cultures, animals are never "pets"; in fact, there may be no word for the concept of "pet" in the student's first language. However, if the class has a pet hamster that the LEP student has helped to feed and nurture, this relationship can be used to help the student understand the relationship between the girl in the story and her pet puppies.

It will also be helpful to prepare the LEP students for the scripts found in the story, by explaining certain roles or by acting out scripts in class. Reading teachers need to expand the script schema of LEP students to include scripts commonly encountered in the reading text. For example, a story about a boy who gets lost while trick-or-treating on Halloween may assume that the reader knows the role children and adults perform at Halloween. If the LEP reader is not familiar with this custom, a helpful prereading activity can include role-playing the scripts for "trick-or-treating." What do children do and what is the expected behavior of adults?

The scripts the characters enact in a story often reflect socio-economic class, culture, and lifestyle. For example, the father in the story may get up in the morning, put on a suit, and drive to the office. This script may be very different from the one the reader's father would repeat daily if he is a farmer, fisherman, or truck driver. The teacher can broaden the student's knowledge of script schema by involving the class in a discussion of the variety of script possibilities for "going to work." Helping students to value their own scripts and that of others is an important part of teaching script schema. A character in a story may behave in a certain way because the author gave her a particular script. Students can retell or rewrite the story by assigning familiar scripts to the characters from their own prior experiences.

Likewise, when the students are forewarned as to the structure or organization of the text they are to read, comprehension can improve. Introductions to a reading assignment that indicate the structure of the selection students are to read, have been shown to be an effective practice in improving the reading performance of LEP students.

For example, if the reading assignment involves an adventure story, the LEP student will benefit if the structure of the story is explained prior to reading, and/or while the story is being read in sections. Students can make predictions about the story as the organizational pattern is explored:

- Encounter: Who and what is involved?
- Conflict: What is the conflict and why?
- Escape: Who escapes and how will it happen?
- Chase: How will the story end?

## Introduce Meaningful Reading Skills

If reading lessons consist only of decoding or word recognition practice with little relationship to comprehension, students will believe that simply pronouncing words accurately is all that constitutes success in reading. While decoding instruction and practice are believed to facilitate comprehension during the first years of reading, they have limited usefulness once the student is capable of reading text written at the 3rd or 4th grade level of difficulty and beyond. At all times, decoding assistance should be provided with the intent of helping students achieve comprehension.

Decoding skills are easily learned by limited English proficient students. At times the student's apparent fluency in applying decoding abilities in the oral reading of English may give the appearance that (s)he is also comprehending the text. This may not be so. Decoding without understanding is not reading. Decoding practice without application to real reading is useless.

The more time spent on activities related to decoding, the less time is available for students to experience activities designed to enrich language development and activate the student's schema. While decoding skills should be practiced by LEP students, a balance must exist.

Reading skills certainly include decoding practice but decoding skills are not the only skills that will help students find meaning from the printed message. Comprehension can be enhanced through literary skills such as describing the plot, understanding regional jargon, recognizing puns, and identifying the author's point of view. Language skills also help students by exploring the grammatical, lexical, and syntactic features of the written English language. Meaning can be highlighted as students recognize compound words, suffixes, and prefixes. Looking for context clues and recognizing the multiple meaning of words are additional examples of language skills that build comprehension. Study skills can also be useful. Developing an outline of the story will help students understand the story structure.

Knowing how to use reference materials, how and when to skim a selection or when to read for details, are study skills that will increase the LEP student's ability to read for meaning. When planning skills instruction for LEP students, the following guidelines will be useful:

- Introduce skills in the context of a reading selection.
- Select the skills the student will need to unlock the author's message.
- Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time on skills instruction at the expense of developing the student's language and schema.
- When possible, incorporate skill instruction into the development of language and schema.

## The Language Experience Approach

There are three aspects of the Language Experience Approach that will be discussed.

### *What is the Language Experience Approach?*

Definition: The Language Experience Approach is a process that transcribes students' words into reading material.

With this approach, the students' skills of listening and speech are used as the bridge to reading and writing. The experiences of the student are an integral part of initial reading and writing as these experiences become the basis for the content of the materials used in instruction.

Process: With the Language Experience Approach, the teacher provides a stimulus and the students generate an oral composition or story which is then written down. The students are then guided by the teacher through a reading lesson using these student-dictated materials. The steps most common to this approach are:

1. Stimulate with a Catalyst
   a. The teacher plans an experience for the class.
   b. Students directly get involved in the experience.
2. Create the Story
   a. A student or several students orally respond to the experience.
   b. The experience is discussed and dictated.
   c. This dictation is written by the teacher or student.
   d. The writing is read.
3. Develop Reading Skills
   a. Students are involved in related comprehension and language extension activities.
   b. Decoding instruction and practice is provided.
   c. Follow-up activities are integrated into art, social studies, science, health, physical education, math, etc. (The catalyst may originate from a content area.)

### *Why is the Language Experience Approach Effective With Native Students?*

The Language Experience Approach removes two major impediments which can block students from experiencing successful interaction with the text, language, and schema.

#### Language

Because the language employed in creating reading stories is that of the student, it can never run ahead of the student's current English language proficiency level in sentence structure (syntactic complexity) or vocabulary (lexical abstractness). The particular sentences (syntax) and vocabulary (lexicon) recorded by the teacher or scribe, are the student's own and become the language in the materials used in teaching reading. Thus, one important impediment is removed from the task of teaching English reading to Native students. The language of the reading material is at the lexical and syntactical level of the language of the student.

#### Schema

The catalyst provides a common experience from which the story content is drawn. By involving the student directly with the catalyst, teachers can ensure that the subject matter of the student's dictation is familiar and well-incorporated into the student's content schema. The student is never asked to talk about an action, event, object, sensation, feeling, etc., that (s)he has not experienced. Thus, a second important impediment potentially faced by the student is removed. The content schema of the story is a part of the schema of the student.

Sometimes a student writes personal experiences about people in his or her world. Therefore, the script schema in his or her story will be a familiar one that is part of the student's world. Characters will not be behaving in ways unknown to the student. The roles of family, friends, or members of the student's community will be reflected in his or her dictation.

The student is responsible for the writing or organization of the sentences that are recorded in

a language experience lesson. The teacher is asked not to alter the student's expression or arrangement. In this way, when students are called upon to reread the story, they can accurately predict the sequence of content in the composition. Thus, the impediment of differences in structure schema that sometimes limits comprehension for a student, is removed. The structure schema of the reading material reflects the structure schema of its author, the student.

The Language Experience Approach is useful in meeting the reading needs of the Native student, in that it removes major impediments that can present stumbling blocks for the reader; namely the author's language and text schema.

## *How is a Language Experience Lesson Presented?*

There are three recommended parts to a language experience lesson.

### Catalyst

A stimulus or common experience is used to spark student interest, create an atmosphere for oral language production, focus student attention on the lesson at hand, and generally prepare students for the creation of a written story. The catalyst should stimulate the students so that language flows naturally because of the high level of interest, content familiarity, low anxiety, and prior experiences. The catalyst provides an excellent means to activate schema. Suggested catalysts are:

- Simple objects
- Social studies dramatization
- Animals
- Music
- Sport events
- Art prints
- Reaction to visuals
- Rhymes
- Stories read or retold
- Assemblies
- Hypothetical conjecture
- Discussions and prior experiences
- Field trips
- Art experiences
- Problem-solving situations
- Films or filmstrips
- Science experiments
- Wordless books
- Guest speakers

Students actively experience the catalyst, and learn vocabulary appropriate for the concrete actions and objects presented. They ask or answer questions and generate oral language as appropriate for their level of proficiency. For very limited English proficient students, little English language generation can be expected. This approach is appropriate for developing literacy in any language, therefore using a student's Native language may be appropriate. With these students, the teacher may find himself or herself as the most significant source of language heard during the lesson. More proficient students can and should be involved directly in using language appropriate to the situation.

### Story Creation

Following the experience, the students are asked to talk about the catalyst. This may include what they remembered, what it looked like, what they did, what they liked or disliked, how it can be used, how it compares with another object or experience, etc. Or the discussion can involve storytelling or oral dramatization, with the catalyst serving as the stimulus for this creativity. This language is written down by the classroom teacher, peer tutor, volunteer, or the students themselves.

The oral language prompted by the teacher and generated in response to the catalyst is recorded by the teacher or scribe. The teacher may decide to record the language exactly as dictated by the student or (s)he may elect to correct any error in syntax (grammar and sentence structure) that the student may make. Many supporters believe that it is important to record the story exactly as the student gives it, without making any corrections in usage or idea organization, and that the student should read the material the way (s)he originally stated it. On the other hand, there are those who strongly feel that language development will be impaired by not correcting the grammar errors in the dictated story. Before deciding whether to correct or not to correct, the teacher may wish to confer with other staff whose input and experience may be helpful. Words should be spelled correctly and not reflect the phonological variation of the student's speech.

For minimally proficient students, all that may be expected is a one-word or two-word response to the object, action, or catalyst. With more proficient students, short phrases may be forthcoming. With still more proficiency, students may use simple sentences in discussing the catalyst. Procedures for creating stories vary slightly depending on

group size. The teacher may work with the total class, small groups, individuals, or the students may work in pairs.

### *Group Story*

- Teacher asks students to name objects, actions, etc.
- Teacher initiates student discussion regarding the catalyst. This discussion depends upon the level of language of the students and may be stimulated with:
  - Who or what occurred?
  - What did you see?
  - What do you do? (requesting factual information)
  - What do we call what happened? Saw? Did? (asking for main topic ideas)
  - How or why did...happen? (interpretation)
  - How would you feel if...? (conjecture)
  - If...then... (hypothesis)
- Student responses to teacher's questions are written on chalkboard using the student's language as closely as possible.
- Optional: after several sentences have been recorded, students are asked to sequence the story. (Sentences can also be written in the order they are dictated.)
- Teacher asks the students to select a title for the story.
- Teacher reads the composition.
- Each sentence is read again, this time with the class repeating after the teacher.
- Individual students read the composition.
- Students copy the language experience story from the chalkboard onto their own paper.

### *Individual Story*

With slight modification, the above procedure can be followed when the student writes or dictates an individual story. In creating the story, the teacher can work with the individual to record the oral response to the catalyst, or the student can write his own story. The student's unique experience with the catalyst becomes the content of the reading material.

### *Team Stories*

Peers working together may follow the sequence suggested below:

- Catalyst activity is experienced by the total group and includes group discussion.
- Teacher pairs or groups students.
- Students duo- or team-brainstorm: words, phrases, and sentences related to their catalyst experience.
- Students duo- or team-write their list on a sheet of paper.
- Lists are shared with the entire class and expanded after class discussion.
- Students make decisions regarding which items to keep.
- Students rewrite list of words into sentences.
- Students duo- or team-decide on sequence of sentences and rewrite sentences in this order.
- Student groups select a title for their story.
- Student groups read the story to others.
- Student groups illustrate the story.

## Reading Skills Development

The student's writing can be used to develop any of the reading skills taught at his or her level. Included among these reading skills are:

- Summarizing a story
- Word recognition strategies
- Retelling a story (decoding)
- Selecting a title and main idea
- Learning correct syntax
- Sequencing sentences
- Categorizing
- Recognizing sight vocabulary
- Looking for content
- Alphabetizing

The teacher may use the skills scope and sequences from a basal reading series as a guide for introducing skills. Student- authored reading material provides the context for presenting these skills.

Students can measure the growth in their reading skills as they develop word banks, language experience dictionaries, or a library of student-authored stories. The student's stories provide reading materials for the entire class to share and enjoy while they practice the skills introduced by the teacher.

## Adapting the Basal Reader

Three questions will be given attention in discussing the process of adapting the basal reader:

### *What is "Adapting the Basal?"*

Traditional basal readers are written for an average native English speaking population that has demonstrated language development expected for their age, has acquired reading skills appropriate for their age and number of years in school, and has schema somewhat similar to that which they encounter in the text. Each of these areas, however, may pose problems for the Native reader. In order to provide useful instruction for the student, the lesson in the basal reader may need to be taught differently than the lesson described in the teacher's guide. In this process of adaptation, the teacher analyzes the basal reader for potential language concerns, content schema deficiencies, structure schema differences, and the presence of reading demands that exceed the skills of the student. Once these problem areas have been identified, the teacher adjusts the lesson to meet the needs of the Native student.

### *Why Must Basals be Adapted for Native Students?*

For the student to benefit from reading instruction in a basal reading series, (s)he must be able to find meaning in the author's message. A reading lesson that is planned to accommodate the special nature of the student helps remove the barriers to understanding.

The language of the text may be beyond the student's productive or receptive level. The vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and idioms used by the author may be unfamiliar to the student. The cultural experiences and background of the child may be different from the schema of the text. The student may not be able to comprehend the text because of limited reading skills. All of these barriers interact to block comprehension for the reader.

### *How Can Reading Teachers Adapt the Basal?*

The following steps are recommended in order to accommodate the special needs of the reader:

#### Step I: Introducing the Story

The purpose of the story introduction is to minimize any barriers between the student and comprehension. This is done by activating schema, developing language, and introducing reading skills the student will need to obtain meaning from the story.

##### *Activate Schema*

The reading teacher needs to find out what the student already knows about the content of the story. Is it unfamiliar to the student, or does (s)he have content schema that can be related to the story to help provide meaning? The teacher can discover the student's prior knowledge by asking questions such as:

- What do you remember about...?
- Have you ever seen a...?
- What do you know about...?
- Recall when we did...
- What do you think about when...is mentioned?

Another technique is to have students cluster a topic. This is done by asking all the students to tell you what they know about a subject and organizing their information in a web. If the student's knowledge of the topic is limited, the teacher can provide concrete experiences to familiarize the student with the content they will be reading. For example, if the story is about making pancakes and this food is unknown to the student, then an appropriate introduction of the story will be cooking pancakes in class, or visually describing the process and demonstrating the end product for the student to sample. The cooking experience broadens the student's content schema and helps give meaning to the story.

Are there scripts in the story that are unknown to the student? For example, if the routine of riding the subway to work every day is a central event in the story, and the child has no reference for this experience, it may be necessary to act out the routine in class: walking to the stop, climbing down the stairs, purchasing a ticket, waiting for the train, finding a seat, reading the paper, etc. Acting out unfamiliar roles that people in the story are performing will help activate the student's script schema.

The introductory period can also be used to prepare the student for the structure of the story, often referred to as "story grammar." An advance organizer will help the student predict the events of the story and enhance meaning. The student will encounter a variety of organizational patterns in the basal reader. Several are described below:

- Simple Narrative (Found in Primary Basals)
  - Setting and character
  - Beginning/problem

- Reaction/feeling
- Attempt/solution
- Outcome/ending

- Expository Writing (Found in Content Area Readers)
  - Topic area
  - Subtopic 1
  - — Elaboration
  - — Examples
  - Subtopic 2
  - — Elaboration
  - — Examples
  - Subtopic 3
  - — Elaboration
  - — Examples
  - Conclusions
- Adventure Stories
  - Encounter
  - Conflict
  - Escape
  - Chase
- Science Reports
  - Problem statement
  - Hypotheses
  - Materials/procedures
  - Data collection/observation
  - Conclusions
- Persuasive Writing
  - Problem statement
  - Solution proposal
  - Arguments and counter-arguments
  - Effectiveness of solution
  - Implementation
  - Conclusions

### *Develop Language*

If vocabulary, idioms, syntax, etc., in the story will block meaning, it is worth the time to review them with the student. Concrete objects and visuals should be used as often as possible to convey meaning.

### *Introduce Reading Skills*

The only purpose for teaching a reading skill during the introduction to the story is if the student will need the skill to get meaning from the text. For example, if a root word is used repeatedly in the story, but in a variety of forms (i.e., help, helpful, helpless), it might be necessary to introduce structural analysis as a means of decoding words. Time should be allowed for reading skills — only if meaning would be lost without the skill. Key vocabulary words that the student understands but cannot decode can be introduced as sight words accompanied by visuals when possible.

The introductory period should encourage free language use, while the student shares his or her background knowledge and responds to questions from the teacher. The student may often use language (particularly vocabulary) which may not be standard. That is, the student may overgeneralize a term but use it in a context in which the intent of his or her communication may still be clear. For example, the term "ice cream" may be used when "popsicle" is clearly the intent. Or the student may utter sentences that are ungrammatical such as "We goed to the Christmas party."

It is recommended that the teacher respond to the "truth value" of the student's utterance and not to the structure, form, or accuracy of the language. In this way, the student is encouraged to create language to communicate his or her background knowledge related to the content of the reading selection. This experience affords language practice and is consistent with the suggested conditions for language development.

## Step II: Building Comprehension Through Storytelling

Step II is an extension of Step I in that the teacher is still preparing the reader for his or her encounter with the text. This step reduces the uncertainty faced by the student, and ensures no "surprises." During Step II, the teacher tells the story to the student. The following procedures are suggested:

- Tell the story using visuals, gestures, and facial expressions to help convey meaning. The story pictures from the text may be used.
- Stress key vocabulary by writing the words as they are being used.
- Retell the story leaving out key words for the student to insert. Underline them on the board as the student says them.
- Encourage the student to retell the story in his or her own words.
- Review key words by introducing appropriate reading skills that will aid word recognition.

- Ask the student questions using story grammar as an organizer:
  - Setting: Where and when did the events in the story take place? Who was involved in them?
  - Beginning: What started the chain of events in the story?
  - Reaction: What was the main character's reaction to this event?
  - Attempt: What did the main character do about it?
  - Outcome: What happened as a result of what the main character did?

### Step III: Reading the Story

To facilitate comprehension, it is recommended that the teacher guide the student through the reading selection. Suggestions are given below:

- Assign short sections to read, one at a time.
- Establish purpose-setting questions for each section.
- Ask the student to read a section and retell it to a peer.
- Discuss idiomatic expressions.
- Ask the student to predict what will happen next.

When the student has completed the story, check comprehension by asking him or her to participate in a variety of activities:

- Sequence the story by drawing illustrations.
- Act out the story.
- Describe a character in the story.
- Retell or rewrite the story by making oneself the main character.
- End the story in a different way.
- Compare the story to another one.
- Outline the selection.
- Write a story using the same organizational structure as the story just completed.

### Step IV: Applying Reading Skills

The teacher's guide to any basal series will contain numerous reading skills. In selecting skills appropriate for the LEP student, it is important to remember that the focus should be comprehension. Skills isolated from any meaningful context will not be useful. Examples of appropriate skills might be:

- Putting together sentence puzzles, using the story to practice syntax.
- Alphabetizing words from the story.
- Finding words from the story that have the same phonetic elements (i.e., vowel sounds, rhyming words, etc.).
- Identifying the main idea.
- Making predictions about outcomes.
- Using words from the story to associate consonant in initial, medial, or final position.
- Developing word meaning through context clues.
- Developing synonyms or antonyms for words in the story.

## Current Trends and Directions in Reading

Any discussion of reading instruction cannot be considered complete without attention given to some current trends in language arts instruction. In recent years, a great deal of interest has emerged in instructional models that integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The strongest manifestation of this direction is the whole language movement that is currently gaining increasing recognition and support in the United States. This section will explore what is meant by "integrating the language arts." In addition, the underlying principles of whole language will be discussed.

### *What is Meant by "Integrating the Language Arts?"*

Many classroom teachers no longer view speaking, listening, reading, writing, literature, spelling, handwriting, and grammar as separate subjects to be taught with separate texts. Instead, they integrate these areas in their instruction in support of the following philosophical perspective:

- Language, both oral and written, is the primary means of creating new knowledge as well as the means for communicating that knowledge to others. Language is verbal thinking.
- Language is balanced between the two receptive processes of listening and reading and the two productive processes of speaking and writing. The four language processes are interrelated and interdependent. Deficiency or growth in one may cause deficiency or growth in another.

- Literature provides the best models of language. Students learn language in a way superior to direct instruction by internalizing literary models through listening, reading, retelling, discussing, dramatizing, and writing.
- The purpose of language is to make meaning. Skills are important in that they aid meaning. Skills are part of, and never separate from, purposeful communication.

This philosophical perspective translates into the following instructional guidelines:

- The basal reading system can be the core of the integrated curriculum if teachers are uncertain about how to teach reading through literature.
- Students, working in groups, talk through their learning in all subjects, talk out their compositions before they write, and engage in activities that promote oral expression: storytelling, choral reading, reader's theater, creative dramatics, etc.
- Students write daily as a follow-up to reading, instead of using workbooks or ditto sheets.
- The students' difficulties in oral and written discourse determine what they need to study in grammar and usage.
- Spelling lists will be made from the students' errors in writing.
- Similar guidelines are used in content areas to effect integrated language-across-the-curriculum. (Buckley, 1986)

## *What is the "Whole Language" Approach?*

A greater understanding and appreciation of children's processing abilities has emerged during the last 20 years supporting the notion that children can learn to read quite naturally if instructional procedures are in keeping with their natural linguistic competencies and abilities. The term "whole language" describes reading programs that are built on this body of knowledge which has come out of the work of educators, cognitive psychologists, and psycholinguists. Their studies suggest that reading is not simply a compilation of skills to be "poured" into learners' minds for their conscious learning, but rather a "skill" of processing whole language that allows learning to read to occur implicitly. Whole language proponents believe that reading and writing are learned by reading and writing. Furthermore, practice in these areas cannot be artificial or contrived. It must be bonded to what the students bring with them into the classroom and directed at what matters to them beyond the school walls.

In the whole language instructional model, reading is viewed as a developmental process: learners grow through similar stages, but not at the same rate and not in the same way. As they grow, it is important that students be immersed in a language-rich environment, rich in exposure to written as well as oral language so that they are introduced to both the forms and functions of written language.

Classroom practices in a whole language classroom are based on the belief that language should not be fragmented. Whole language rejects:

- Isolating skill sequences.
- Slicing up reading and writing into grade slices, each slice neatly following and dependent on prior ones.
- Simplifying texts by controlling their sentence structures and vocabulary, or organizing them around phonic patterns.
- Isolating reading and writing instruction from its use in learning, or in actual reading and writing.
- Believing there are substantial numbers of learners who have difficulty learning to read or write for any physical or intellectual reason (Goodman, 1986).

## Whole Language Instructional Practices

- Reading strategy instruction is a major component of a whole language program. Readers are guided to predict and confirm their predictions and to constantly ask themselves as they read: "Does this make sense?" and "What do I think will happen next?"
- Whole language programs accept the reality of learning through risk-taking, errors, reversed letters, invented spellings, creative punctuation, and reading and writing miscues. These are viewed as indications of growth toward control of the language process.
- The teacher motivates, arranges the environment, monitors development, provides relevant and appropriate materials, and invites the learner to participate in the activities.
- Language teachers do not use basals at all, but build their programs around children's

literature. In a whole language classroom, there are books, magazines, newspapers, directories, posters, and many other forms of print all around. What is considered appropriate to read is anything the reader needs or wants to read.

- The focus of all activities is on meaning and not on language itself, but language as it naturally happens in authentic speech and literacy events. Comprehension of meaning is always the goal of readers. (Goodman, 1986)

### Whole Language and the Native Student Reader

A growing number of English as a second language (ESL) instructors have become increasingly interested in the whole language movement happening in the United States. Many have come to support the learning theory on which whole language is based, believing that language is inclusive, and that it is indivisible. They have come to view the controlled vocabulary, phonic principles, or short, choppy sentences frequently found in ESL readers or basals as presenting an artificial idea of what the purposes of language are and thus, serving only to make language learning hard, irrelevant, and uninteresting.

Reading programs for the student often provide language that is isolated from real speech and literacy contexts. This may be particularly true at the secondary level where programmed ESL texts often dictate the direction of reading instruction. A reading program based on student-selected material, on the other hand, might provide greater motivation for the student to become a "self-directed agent seeking meaning," especially if reading texts were available that were relevant to the student's own experiences. Because readers tend to be interested in reading texts that have some relationship to their own background, the student who chooses his or her own texts is, in effect, also providing his or her own appropriate background knowledge for understanding the text (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983).

## Addressing the Content Area Curriculum Needs of the American Indian and Alaska Native Student

It has been well established that many Native students have difficulty with content area classes if they do not possess adequate cognitive academic language proficiency at the same level as the texts being used. When this occurs in a content area class, the students are oftentimes "pulled out" of the regular class and provided with remedial work. The problem with this approach is that while the student in need is out of the classroom, the level of instruction continues on and (s)he falls behind the content and skills level that the whole class is addressing. This section will examine approaches whereby students with skills' needs may stay in the classroom and the teacher will use varying methods that will address all of the needs of all of the students, thus avoiding the phenomenon of some students falling behind in content when they lack adequate skills to access the content area materials.

### *What are the Needs of the Native Students?*

There are, despite the differences among Native students, some uniform needs that should be recognized by content area curriculum classroom teachers:

- The cultural heritage of the Native student needs to be recognized as an asset to the class. The various ethnic and cultural groups represented in the classroom provide numerous resources which can be used to enhance classroom learning for all students.
- The Native student needs a warm, accepting environment that allows him or her to become a risk-taker in learning a new skill or content area.
- The student may need to have a "silent period" or a period during which he or she listens to a great deal of language in order to get a feel for the new sounds and vocabulary that have meaning for that particular content area.
- Some Native students may need appropriate ESL instruction, depending on their level of English language proficiency. Such instruction should include both interpersonal communicative language skills and cognitive academic language skills. It should be noted that while second language learners (including "Reservation English" and "Village English" speakers) can attain proficiency in interpersonal communication within two years, attaining proficiency in cognitive academic language skills requires from five to seven years (Cummins, 1981).
- The Native student needs content material that will provide him or her with concepts

that are appropriate for his or her grade level and achievement level.

- The student needs to have abstract content information and concepts made comprehensible. (Krashen, 1981)
- The Native student needs an instructional program in the content areas which incorporates the use of concrete materials, shared experiences, and prior knowledge.
- The Native LEP student may need special consideration in regard to daily assignments and testing. The language demands in such situations may pose barriers to success and may require modification. Because Native LEP students may have difficulty using English as a complete thought medium, they may need more time to complete assignments and tests. It is important to determine whether assignments and tests assess the understanding of the content or knowledge of the language associated with the content.

## Identifying Instructional Strategies

The following questions should be addressed before the teacher plans instruction for the Native student:

### *How Can the Teacher Plan for Native Student Needs?*

#### Creating a Positive, Welcoming Classroom Environment

Going into a new or cross-cultural situation often provokes feelings of stress and anxiety. This is especially true of school age children when faced with the first day of school in a new environment. Add to this the factor of not knowing the language of the new environment and one can easily imagine how these feelings might be even more intense. In recognition of these feelings, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the Native student be made to feel as comfortable as possible that first day in order that the foundation be paved for a positive school experience in the future.

#### Immediate Needs

When developing a plan to meet the needs of the Native student in the content area classroom, the teacher needs to consider both immediate and long-term needs. The immediate needs focus on helping the Native student feel as comfortable as possible in the new learning situation.

#### Long-Term Needs

The long-term needs involve taking into account the background characteristics of the Native student, identifying resources available for serving that student, and giving consideration to appropriate instructional approaches. Before developing a plan for the student's long-term needs, the teacher should consider the following questions:

- What are the students' background, culture, previous educational experience, home situation, general abilities, and interests?
- What resources and materials for serving the Native student are available within the building, the district, and the state?
- What teaching approaches are effective with Native students?

After addressing the above questions, a plan can be developed that includes: daily schedule, instructional strategies, alternative instruction, and evaluation process. A meeting with all staff who will be working with the student will provide an opportunity for everyone to make suggestions and to approve the plan. When possible, meet with parents to review the plan and to solicit their input.

### *What Instructional Strategies are Effective for Native Students?*

In developing and carrying out a long-term plan for the Native student, the teacher needs to consider certain instructional approaches. The following approaches help to provide the Native student, as well as all students, with an instructional program that will enhance learning.

#### Analyze Language Complexity of the Learning Task

The language demands that the Native student faces in the classroom can be reduced when the teacher considers the complexity of the language involved in classroom communication activities. The level of complexity is influenced by two major factors: the number of contextual clues that are present to assist comprehension, and the cognitive complexity of the task.

Cummins (1981) suggests that all tasks requiring language skills may be placed on a grid formed by the intersection of two continua depicting two major dimensions of language proficiency — communicative language skills and academic language skills. The horizontal continuum describes the amount of contextual support present in a task. At

one extreme, meaning is actively negotiated between speaker and listener, and the communication is supported by a wide range of contextual clues. An example of this kind of communication would be determining whose turn is next during a game at recess time. At the other end of the continuum, context is reduced; very few clues to meaning are provided. An example of context-reduced communication might be the reading of a chapter in a history text.

The vertical continuum represents the cognitive demands of the communication task. An example of a cognitively undemanding task might be the experienced driver reading and interpreting traffic signs, an activity that has become so automatic as to be almost subconscious. A typical cognitively undemanding classroom task with many context clues might be having the student match a quantity of concrete objects to written numerals. A cognitively undemanding task with few context clues might be requiring the student to copy written materials.

An example of a cognitively demanding task, on the other hand, with many clues might be giving the student math word problems with concrete referents or pictures to assist in problem-solving. Finally, a cognitively demanding task, with few clues, might be listening to a lecture on the American Revolution.

The language demands that the student faces in the classroom increase in difficulty as the contextual clues become fewer and the cognitive task becomes more complex. The cognitive task often will demand the kind of academic language skill required for literacy skills such as decoding, reading comprehension, deriving meaning from context, study skills, and writing proficiency. This kind of language proficiency, therefore, is more challenging in its comprehension requirements, in contrast to language surrounded by context clues where meaning is more easily clarified through concrete referents.

## Providing Contextual Clues

The following strategies will help to place language in a more meaningful context for the students:

- Use Visuals

When a spoken word can be further represented by a visual, it diminishes the complexity of a task. The visual allows the listener one more clue to comprehension. The teacher talks about a country while using a map of the country. The teacher demonstrates the process of subtraction by using blocks or pieces of candy to show what happens when something is subtracted.

- Provide Hands-On Activities

Students needs the opportunity to explore and discover things. Language proficiency can be developed along with content through activities such as drawing and constructing maps, making dioramas, role-playing historical events, conducting experiments, and using manipulatives.

- Using a Model or Sample of a Finished Product

A model or sample of a finished product gives students a guide of what is expected. Each student can use the model to visualize and compare his or her own work. It provides a visual guide when the teacher is not able to give further directions. The model provides the student with a constant self-monitoring process. The teacher might post a model of how to head a paper or display the finished product of student-made books.

- Give a Visual Representation of Verbal Directions

The steps that a student follows to complete a task should be presented in the oral mode and reinforced with visual clue. The steps to complete a craft project or a math process should be represented visually as well as verbally. The steps can be placed on the chalkboard or on a chart for quick reference. The teacher needs to spend time relating the visual to the verbal directions. The teacher can, for example, present seatwork directions verbally and relate them to picture clues on the chalkboard to help increase the student's understanding and memory. If the teacher wants the students to cut out pictures, the words "cut out the pictures" are printed on the board with a picture of scissors. Pictures with verbal directions provide comprehensible input for the students.

- Provide Demonstrations or Modeling

Modeling is the demonstration and explanation of a process or product by the teacher. For example, the teacher, in introducing how to use a microscope, carefully demonstrates its use and points out the most important features. Or, the teacher demonstrates ways to put correct shadowing in a picture, or how to do a certain math procedure before allowing the class to try the problem.

The modeling by the teacher provides the students with an example they can draw from when they attempt the new skill. The model should have two characteristics:

- The model should be perfect, which means it should be clearly understood without room for misinterpretation.

- The teacher should point out the key ideas that make the model perfect.

Modeling helps to identify and to visualize a process or product that a teacher wants to teach. Modeling helps to reinforce skills being taught, clarifies a skill, meets the needs of various learning styles, and will provide a concrete rather than an abstract experience.

- Nonverbal Embellishment

When the teacher points and uses hand gestures, the students are provided with additional clues to the teacher's message. The teacher can simply point to the place where finished worksheets should be returned. With a hand gesture, the teacher can show or approximate an inch in a measurement lesson. The gestures and references to concrete examples helps to narrow the scope for the listener.

- Activate and Expand the Prior Experiences of Students

A person's background experiences have a direct influence on what (s)he comprehends. If the learner is able to relate new information to past experiences, learning is enhanced (Pearson and Spiro, 1982). Students can share their prior knowledge as a preliminary stage to any lesson. As required, the teacher provides additional experiences to extend the student's range of experience. It is important that the teacher use the student's prior experiences as a bridge to introduce new information. The student who is very knowledgeable about animals can easily relate to a lesson on food chains if the teacher builds on this previous knowledge. The prior experiences that a student brings to learning can be termed the students "schema." It is the responsibility of the teacher to acknowledge the student's existing schema and provide opportunities to expand on what is already known.

Placing language in a meaningful context is one of the key strategies for teaching the Native student in the content area classroom. Not only does it increase the likelihood of academic success for the student as key concepts are explored in content areas, but it also simultaneously facilitates the development of language and communication skills.

## Provide for Peer Interaction and Cooperative Learning Experiences

Acquisition of language and oral communication skills is further facilitated by the use of cooperative small group work. Students working together in small groups obtain natural active practice in all language areas. Johnson, Johnson, Johnson, and Roy (1984) states that "cooperative learning experiences, where students work together to maximize each other's achievement, tend to promote positive relationships and a process of acceptance among students." He identifies four basic elements that must be included in small group learning for it to be considered cooperative learning. The first element is that the group develops positive interdependence. This can be structured to occur by having mutual goals for a group, division of task work, and materials. The teacher can enhance the positive interdependence by joint rewards for a group showing positive interdependence. The second element is face-to-face interaction among the students. The third element is individual accountability for mastery of material covered. And finally, the fourth element requires students to use interpersonal and small group skills. The students need to be taught the social skills of working within a group and also how to assess how their group is functioning. Keeping the four elements of cooperative learning in mind, the teacher assumes the following roles to implement cooperative learning in the classroom:

- States and clarifies the objectives of the lesson for the students. This would include the academic objectives as well as the objectives for the group work.
- Makes decisions about which groups, and the size of the groups, that the students will work in before the lesson begins. The decision is based on the task to be accomplished, number of students, and materials or resources that are available. Heterogeneous grouping is recommended, at least one high-achieving student, one low-achieving student and a mixture by gender and ethnicity of middle level-achieving students.
- Clarifies the task and structures the learning activity for the students.
- Monitors the effectiveness of the groups and is available to provide assistance when a group needs direction.
- Evaluates the students' achievement and leads discussions with students about how their group worked effectively.

The following are some activities that use cooperative learning:

**List-Group Label**

The teacher begins by choosing a topic the class is familiar with. Using the chalkboard or overhead, the teacher leads the class in a brainstorming activity to come up with 20 to 30 words or concepts

related to the topic. The teacher writes down every word suggested. Discuss with the class whether any words are inappropriate and should be eliminated. The class is divided into the cooperative learning groups. The students are told that within their groups they are to select from the brainstormed list of words or concepts that seem to relate to each other. They are to write these words in clusters on their paper; then label each cluster with a descriptive term. The teacher brings the class together for the groups to share their work. There are no right or wrong answers; all reasonable answers are accepted. This activity can be a prereading activity or it can be a follow-up activity to help reinforce and review (Maring, Furman, and Blum-Anderson, 1985).

**Jigsaw**

The teacher in this strategy selects the most important topics to be covered. The teacher then develops directed study questions. The cooperative learning groups are each assigned a specific study question to research as a group. When the groups have their questions answered, they disband and each member joins a new group; each student in turn teaches his or her new group the information that his or her former group researched. The teacher needs to monitor this carefully and to check the research group's work before they disband. This activity allows all students to take an active part and to have something to share.

**Survey, Predict, Read, Revise**

The teacher has all the students list the headings and subheadings for an assigned reading on paper, or the teacher can provide the handouts with this information. The teacher then has the total class brainstorm what kinds of information might be contained under each heading. They will also perform the same activity in their small groups.

The students continue the brainstorming in their small groups, but they record their predictions on their paper. Each student should be required to make at least one prediction within their group for each heading, but the group members should only record the items for which they reach a consensus. Following the brainstorming, the group does the assigned reading to confirm, reject, or modify their predictions. The group then makes decisions about their predictions, making revisions and additions where they are needed. The teacher can bring the total group together to share what information was confirmed. This will help to summarize the content material (Maring, Furman, and Blum-Anderson, 1985).

Cooperative learning can provide the students with positive peer interaction. It can help to foster an independence in learning that does not focus just around the teacher. It can free the teacher to work with children who are having difficulties. Cooperative learning is an efficient way to meet the variety of needs of all students.

Marilyn Burns (1981) describes her "groups of four" as a system of cooperative learning that requires reorganizing the classroom physically, redefining the students' responsibilities, and carefully structuring the teacher's role. Her groups operate under three rules:

- You are responsible for your own work and behavior.
- You must be willing to help any group member who asks.
- You may ask for help from the teacher only when everyone in your group has the same question.

First, the teacher introduces an activity to the groups that is designed to accomplish the lesson objective. The teacher circulates to observe interaction and to help when an entire group has a question or when a group reaches an impasse. The teacher's goal is to get the groups working productively and independently. When groups have finished exploring a problem, it is the teacher's responsibility to summarize the results for the entire class and to lead a discussion about the process. "Groups of four" provide a useful management technique for meeting the varied needs of the students. It also provides a learning environment that maximizes interaction among students. Students have opportunities to exchange thoughts and to validate and rethink their ideas.

The Native student can benefit greatly by working in cooperative peer interaction situations. The teacher structures tasks that encourage the students to discuss and actively work on a problem. For example, a teacher might use peer groups in science by placing the Native student with one or more students. The teacher can direct the groups to carry out a series of experiments and to record the results. The teacher leads a total class discussion and helps summarize the results with the class.

Social studies peer groups can be assigned tasks to obtain information through a research project, such as finding names of key American Indian and Alaska Native and their achievements. Or the students can plan and build a model of a city, or develop a timeline for useful inventions in the 21st century. The teacher can ask students to act out key vocabulary words following or preceding a lesson. The important thing is that all group

tasks be designed to facilitate interaction among the students.

Peer tutoring can also promote the acquisition of language and oral communication skills, and can be beneficial to the tutor as well as to the tutored student. An English proficient student can be paired with the LEP student or an older student with a younger student. Or, a student that has a basic competency in the target skill can serve as a model and tutor for the other. The tutor gains self-esteem while also reinforcing his or her own concepts within a content area. The LEP student is presented with an informal situation in which to interact verbally with only one person, in addition to being given one-on-one attention in a specific content area.

## Modify the Lesson

Modifying the lesson means that the content area teacher adapts the same content and concept to two different populations. First, the most essential or appropriate objectives for a lesson or unit are identified. The content is then modified to provide a better match with the language limitations of the LEP students. Thus, while the lesson demands of the English proficient students and the LEP student are different, the same information can be prepared for and presented to both.

For example, an objective for a social studies lesson on famous American inventors might require students to write an essay stating how the work of one famous inventor has influenced our modern world. The same lesson for the LEP student can require the student to tell the teacher or a peer the names of three famous inventors and what they invented, or to draw a picture to illustrate how the work of a particular inventor has influenced our lives. The teacher needs to be aware of, and to continually challenge, the LEP student's skills. The LEP student's limited English skills should not be confused with a lack of cognitive knowledge.

## Incorporate Comprehension Checks into Lessons

Madeline Hunter's (1982) work supports learning theories that stress the need to check for understanding during teaching, as well as for monitoring and for adjusting instruction throughout a lesson. The following teacher activities will help to ensure that learning is occurring:

- Check to see if students understand the key elements by asking questions throughout the lesson.
- Rephrase the main points in simple language at the end of the lesson. Focus on the main idea of the lesson. Have students restate in their own words their understanding of the information, or have them tell one another one or two new ideas they learned during the lesson.
- Emphasize key content words used in context by writing them on the chalkboard as they were used in context. The teacher can focus attention on written words by circling or underlining them as the students or the teacher uses them. Have the students guess what the words mean; then have them revise their guesses after they become familiar with the definitions of words.

## Use Individual Preview and Review Techniques to Augment Instruction

Ovando and Collier (1985) propose a model which outlines a strategy for lesson preview and review:

- The lesson is introduced by one instructor in the student's first language.
- The lesson is then presented in the second language by another instructor.
- Finally, the lesson is reviewed in the first language.

The regular classroom teacher can use a variation of this model by using an instructional assistant or trained volunteer to present material before a class presentation or lesson. The preview is in English unless resources can provide a Native speaker. The preview stresses the language that will be used in the lesson by introducing the main points covered by the text pages. Time should be spent talking about pictures that are within the lesson. Resource material such as filmstrips, pictures, and books can be used to help build the background information for the student. Following the lesson, a review or summary is presented that allows a teacher to check for understanding. The review can be done on an individual basis by the teacher, instructional assistant, or trained volunteer, or the student can take part in a total class review.

## Provide Alternative Instruction

There are times when a particular lesson will not be comprehensible to the Native student. It is during these times that the teacher can provide alternative activities for the Native student. The following list offers some possibilities for alternative instruction:

- Independent projects such as picture dictionaries, language experience books, story tapes, filmstrips, and art projects; ESL lessons with an ESL instructor, instructional assistant, volunteer, or peer tutor.
- Preview and review lessons with an instructional assistant, volunteer, or peer tutor.
- Media projects such as making a slide show or an animated movie under the supervision of a media instructor.

## Making the Text Comprehensible

The teaching of content subjects and their emphasis or reliance on textbook information provides a special challenge for the Native student and the classroom teacher. The following four-step plan for using a text gives procedures that will benefit all students by providing the support required to comprehend the content of the text (Cooper, 1986).

### *Step I: Preparation*

The first step requires the teacher to examine the material with three questions in mind. The first question is, "What do I want or expect the students to learn from the text?" This step requires the teacher to identify the objectives for the lesson. The teacher makes a decision based on his or her knowledge of the students' language skills and cognitive knowledge. The objective for Native LEP students may be different from the objective for English proficient students. If the teacher determines that the text makes it necessary to "teach to two objectives," then text adaptation may be desirable prior to presentation to the students.

The second question the teacher asks is, "What vocabulary will cause students the most difficulty?" Some words, even though they are not directly related to the key concepts, may still impede text comprehension. Therefore, as the teacher identifies key vocabulary to introduce to the class, other vocabulary should be noted that may be problematic to LEP students.

The third question to consider is, "What background will the students need in order to comprehend the text?" Is there information or a concept that must be explained before the students can understand what they will be reading? Extra resources may be required to help provide this background. The resources need to be as visual and as concrete as possible so that meaning can be grasped.

### *Step II: Developing Vocabulary and Background*

The teacher must decide what vocabulary and background information need to be developed before the students encounter the text. Activating the student's prior knowledge or schema will help the teacher discover what the student already knows and disclose what new information the student will need to be able to comprehend the text. Planning activities that give students credit for what they already know will help bridge the gap between new learning and previously acquired knowledge. The teacher's awareness of the knowledge base the students bring with them will help to determine appropriate resources to expand prior knowledge. Such resources might include the viewing of a film, a field trip, some concrete items brought to class (such as pioneer tools or clothing, to help build background for a unit on the Western movement), or the use of role-playing. Another way to activate prior knowledge is the use of a graphic organizer. Graphic organizers are a visual way of showing the relationship between concepts and ideas. Examples of graphic organizers include semantic maps, clustering, webbing, and linear outlines.

### *Step III: Guided Reading*

Students usually need more information than that contained within the assigned pages of the textbook in order to comprehend the information. Guided reading is a step to building comprehension. The following procedures suggest ways to guide the student through the text:

- Introduce organization of the text. Many texts accent the major points in bold type. The bold type can provide an outline for the student. The special content vocabulary is often in bold type and a definition may appear in an outside column or right with the bold-typed new vocabulary word. The glossaries are also an important aid to the student because they may help to clarify a word, give correct pronunciation, or provide a visual of the word.
- Focus the student's attention on the pictures. The pictures within a text can provide a wealth of information. One useful strategy is for a teacher to assign groups of students a picture in a text and have them answer the following questions: Who, What, Where, Why, When, and How? Once the activity has been done within a group setting, it can give the student a format for looking at other content pictures

as (s)he comes across them in a text. The charts, graphs, and maps within the text also provide visuals for the student and should also be approached with some guided questions.

- Introduce a note-taking technique. The graphic organizer in use with a text can also provide a format for note-taking. The student starts with a single word or concept, for example "atom." While reading the paper, the student writes the word "atom" at the top of his or her paper and answers the questions: Who, What, Where, When, and How.
- Ask students to predict what questions will be answered by the text. After making their predictions, students read for specific answers, thus learning to focus their attention and improving their comprehension skills (Cooper, 1986).
- Pose purpose-setting questions. The purpose for reading a text can directly influence what students comprehend. By asking students questions that relate to the key concepts in the text, the teacher helps students to zero in on the main points. For example, "Why do you think the pioneers wanted to go West?" might be a question posed to students before reading a chapter on the western movement.
- Pair students with reading partners. The use of partners in a study approach can allow a more capable reader to be paired with a less capable reader. One partner reads the text orally with the other student and helps explain the material. The other partner asks questions and points are clarified. The tutor's understanding of the concept is reinforced by attempting to explain it to his or her partner while the tutored student benefits by having his or her comprehension enhanced.
- Rephrase and summarize text after students have finished reading. The teacher needs to stop at certain points and summarize what has been read. The key concepts can be visually represented through outlines, pictures, and graphic organizers. The ultimate goal is to prepare students to summarize material on their own, but the teacher can help teach this skill by first modeling it for the students.

### *Step IV: Follow-Up*

The follow-up activities are an extension, reinforcement, or application of concepts and skills. The follow-up provides a framework for the student to use the newly-learned or acquired skill in a different way. This application provides the student with needed practice and reinforcement. In addition, the follow-up can provide the instructor with the knowledge of how well the student has grasped the new skill. As much as possible, follow-up activities should build on the student's interests, skills and talents. For example, the student who likes to act should be given the opportunity to use role-playing. An artistic student might choose to interpret the new concept through drawing a picture or constructing a model. The activities should be varied and include written, oral, and visual expression. The follow-up, therefore, extends content beyond the text and helps to bring closure on the overall concepts that were presented in the text and content lesson.

## Adapting the Content Lesson

The content lesson for the student should be designed to present new information using concrete objects and visuals whenever they can help to make the oral or written information comprehensible. The following is a checklist to consider when adapting a content area lesson.

### Lesson Objectives

- Are the objectives appropriate?
- Do they need to be modified?
- Does an alternative lesson need to be provided?

### Vocabulary and Key Concepts

- What are the vocabulary and key concepts that need to be presented?
- How can these concepts be presented in a meaningful context?

### Prior Knowledge

- What lesson activities will bring out the students' prior knowledge?
- How can the lesson be related to past experiences?

### Text

- Have the students been prepared to comprehend the text?
- Do preview and review activities for some students need to be provided?

### Lesson Activities

- Are the lessons designed to include peer interaction?
- Do the lessons place the language in meaningful context?
- Have activities been included that will check for understanding?

### Follow-up

- Do the follow-up activities help to apply, reinforce, practice, or extend what has been taught?
- Do the activities address the students' skills, interests, and talents?

By addressing the questions outlined above, the teacher will be able to meet the needs of students while simultaneously providing a rich learning environment.

## References


Asher, J. (1982). *Learning another language through actions: The complete teacher's guidebook*. Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions, Inc.

Bailystok, E. B. (1978). A theoretical model of second language learning. *Language Learning, 28*, 69-83.

Brown, G. (1986). Cross cultural self concept: The best of both worlds. Selected papers from the 1986 MOKAKIT Conference. Vancouver, B.C.: MOKAKIT Indian Education Research Association.

Brown, R. D. (1973). *A first language: The early stages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Buckley, M. H. (1986, April). When teachers decide to integrate the language arts. *Language Arts, 63*.

Burns, M. (1981, September). Groups of four: Solving the management problem. *Learning*, 46-51.

Carrell, P. L., and Eisterhold, J. (1983, December). Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. TESOL Quarterly.

Chamot, A. U. (1985). English language development through a content-based approach. *Issues in English Language Development*. Rosslyn, VA: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Chamot, A. U. et al. (1985, April). School Science for Limited English Proficient Children. FOCUS: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Cooper, J. D. (1986). *Improving reading comprehension*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. *Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework*. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center, California State University.

Derwing, B. L. (1971). *Transformational grammar as a theory of language acquisition*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Enright, D. S., and McCloskey, M. L. (1988). *Integrating English*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fox, S. (1988). A whole language approach to the communication skills. *Teaching the Native American*. Hap Gilliland (Ed.). Billings, MT: Council for Indian Education.

Fox, S. (1990). Literacy for the American Indian: A case study in the intergenerational transfer of cognitive skills. *Applied Behavior and Cognitive Sciences, Inc.* Thomas Sticht (Ed.).

Fox, S. (1986). The whole language approach to language arts for the Indian student. *Teaching the Indian Child: A Bilingual Multicultural Approach*. Jon Reyhner (Ed.). Eastern Montana College, Billings, MT.

Hunter, M. (1982). *Mastery teaching*. Tip Publications.

Goodman, K. (1986). *What's whole in whole language*? Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Higgs, T. V. (1985). Language acquisition and language learning: A plea for syncretism. *Modern Language Journal, 3*.

Indian Nations At Risk: Eastern Regional Public Hearing. (1990, October 2). (Unpublished raw data). Cherokee, NC.

Indian Nations At Risk: Great Lakes Regional Hearing. (1990, September 20). (Unpublished raw data). St. Paul, MN.

Indian Nations At Risk: High Plains Regional Public Hearing. (1990, August 20). (Unpublished raw data). Billings, MT.

Indian Nations At Risk: Northwest Regional Hearing. (1990, September 5). (Unpublished raw data). Seattle, WA.

Indian Nations At Risk: Plains Regional Public Hearing. (1990, September 17-18). (Unpublished raw data). Oklahoma City, OK.

Indian Nations At Risk: Southwest Region. (1990, September 12). (Unpublished raw data). Phoenix, AZ.

Indian Nations At Risk: Summaries of 18 issues sessions. (1990, October). NIEA 22nd Annual Conference, INAR/NACIE joint issues sessions. San Diego, CA.

Indian Nations At Risk: Summary of issues and recommendations from regional hearings. (1990). (Unpublished raw data).

Indian Nations At Risk Task Force: Alaskan Hearing. (1990, July 16-18). (Unpublished raw data). Juneau, AK.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., Johnson, E., and Roy, P. (1984). *Circles of learning cooperation in the classroom*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Washington, D.C.

Kaplan, R. B. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *Language Learning, 16*, 1-20.

Krashen, S. D. and Terrell, Tracy D. (1983). Language acquisition in the classroom. San Francisco: Pergamon/Alemany Press.

Krashen, S. D. (1981). Bilingual education and second language acquisition theory. *Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework*. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center, California State University.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford/Pergamon.

Krashen, S. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Leap, W. (1979). American Indian English and its implications for bilingual education. In *International Dimensions of Bilingual Education*. Alatis, J., (Ed). Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press.

Lindfors, J. W. (1980). *Children's language and learning*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Maring, G. H., Furman, G. C., and Blum-Anderson, J. (1985, December). Five cooperative learning strategies for mainstreamed youngsters in content area classrooms. *The Reading Teacher, 39*, 310-313.

Ovando, C. J. and Collier, V. P. (1985) *Bilingual and ESL classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Pearson and Spiro. (1982, May). The new buzz word in reading is schema. *Instructor*.

Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Saville-Troike, M. (1984, June). What really matters in second language learning for academic achievement? *TESOL Quarterly*.

Slobin, D.I. (1973). *Psycholinguistics*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Winitz, H. (Ed.). (1981). *The comprehension approach to foreign language instruction*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.

## About the Author

**Gerald L. "Jerry" Brown** (Salish-Kootenai-Sioux) works as an education specialist with **Interface Network, Inc.** in Beaverton, Oregon. Interface, the contractor for this commissioned paper, is a private consulting firm which provides educational and management services to clients in private and public sector organizations at the national, state, and local levels. Corporate headquarters for Interface is located at 4800 S.W. Griffith Drive, Suite 202, Beaverton, Oregon 97005 with an office in Anchorage, Alaska. Interface has been a leader in developing materials and training capability for school districts with linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Its teacher training series, "Classrooms Without Borders," was used as a basis for this paper.

Jerry Brown's focus on reading and languages arts skills of American Indian and Alaskan natives began with his employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Torreon Boarding School in New Mexico in the early 1960's. He has developed materials designed to bridge the gap between the academic language of the K-12 curriculum found in most schools and the culture, language, and discourse patterns of Native students. Since 1982, Jerry has provided inservice training to teachers, administrators, parents, and others in bilingual education and equity education with emphasis on assisting students to access the educational opportunities available to them.